

# IN THESE TIMES

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MARCH 13-19, 1985

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pages 15-17  
*Nicaragua  
and disenchanted  
liberals*

**Mass transit:**

*rolling toward disaster*

*pages 6-7*



# Life of the Party

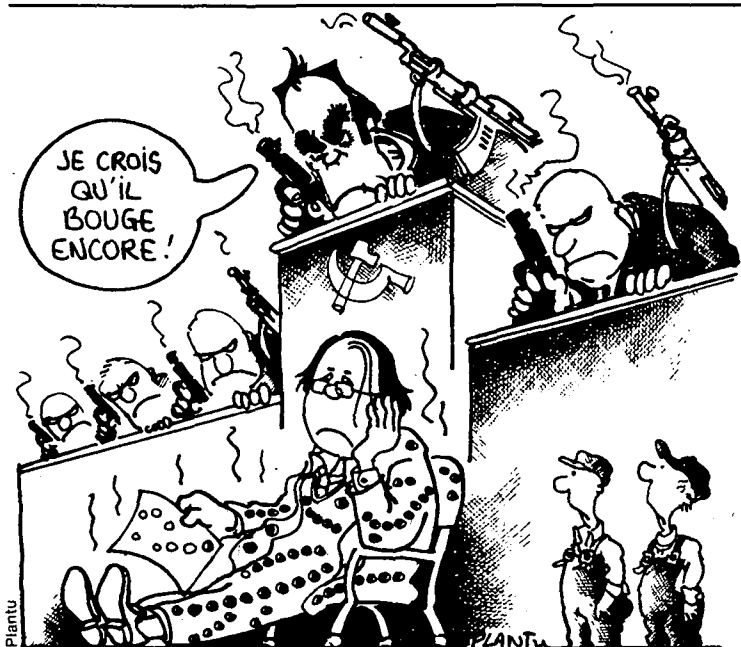
By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

In the weeks leading up to the 25th congress of the French Communist Party (PCF) February 6-10, there was one Communist who actually got good press in France. This was Pierre Juquin, who, although official Party spokesman, said nothing for months to the non-Communist press. As the PCF's last prominent pro-Italian Eurocommunist, Juquin seemed about to get the axe. Journalists and even cartoonists treated him with exceptional commiseration and tenderness.

Juquin's popularity with the media began on the night of the PCF's dismal showing (11 percent of the vote) in the European Parliamentary elections last June, when he blurted out his opinion that the PCF ought to take some lessons from the Italian Communist Party. As George Marchais and the small group in the secretariat who really run the Party prepared to tighten their grip at the 25th congress, Juquin bravely voted against their draft resolution and published a critical article in *L'Humanité*, the party organ. Juquin pointed out what everyone knows: the PCF has squandered its historic gains, its electorate is aging, its membership is dropping, its press is less and less read and in danger of going under and, "worse still," it is suffering from "diminished militancy, a loss of identity and credibility."

Juquin complained that there was no serious analysis in the draft resolution of the Party's admitted failure for more than 20 years to keep up with the times. In the absence of any clear program for the transition to socialism, the PCF, he warned, risked going on "oscillating between action at the base (strongly anti-Socialist and perhaps even ultra-left) and unprincipled left unity for elections." Juquin called for



George Marchais about Pierre Juquin: "I think he's still moving."

## THE STORY INSIDE

what he called "Communist fundamentalism," a party that "speaks the truth" and "defends at all costs humanist values."

As the most prominent of the Party's would-be "renovators," Juquin was easy for the leadership to isolate. For one thing, although the son of a railway worker, he is an intellectual with degrees in German and a possible teaching career to fall back on—unusual in the PCF apparatus. And Juquin has never been considered altogether solid by the Communist rank and file.

On the other hand, dissatisfaction, even disgust and fury, with Marchais and his team were too strong and widespread to silence. The federation of Haute Vienne (the Limoges area), a longstanding Communist stronghold led by Resistance hero Marcel Rigout, President Mitterrand's minister of vocational training until the PCF pulled out of the government last summer, not only proposed amendments to the draft resolution but also actually voted down the original text—an unprecedented defiance of the leadership. A couple of other federations did the same. A third "renovator," Felix Damette, warned the congress that "our relations with the people are deteriorating rapidly." Indeed, by its organizational behavior and style, the PCF has managed to discredit the whole line of political argument it is supposed to defend. Standard left viewpoints or Marxist analyses are being marginalized in France along with the PCF. Many, perhaps most Communists blame Marchais. But under the rules of democratic centralism, which ban organized "factions" or "tendencies," there is no way to put together a coherent alternative to a discredited leadership.

The leadership, on the other hand, is allowed all the time it needs to rationalize past failures and put forth a platform designed to resist the inescapably dispersed and incomplete attacks of its critics. In his five-hour speech opening the congress, Marchais buried the strategy of left unity once and for all (or until it is dug up again), blaming its

failure on Mitterrand, the Socialist Party and the Fifth Republic, which he described as a "quasi-monarchy." Mitterrand, said Marchais, had criticized the strong presidency established by de Gaulle all the better to take it over and reinforce it. There is a lot of truth in this. But the French size up all their politicians as hypocrites, and in this case, Mitterrand is the smart, winning hypocrite and Marchais is the dumb, losing one. Nobody loves a loser—not in 1985.

Marchais and company admitted things were bad, but insisted it was not their fault. Paul Laurent uttered the last word in PCF historical determinism—or fatalism—when he explicitly rejected, on behalf of the leadership, "anything that tends to suggest that another way of doing things, at such and such a moment, could have altered the general course of events."

As usual, whenever "Socialist betrayal" leads the PCF to give up on "unity at the top," it turns to "unity at the base" in some form. Thus the new line is called the *nouveau rassemblement majoritaire populaire*, the new popular majority party members were exhorted to bring about by some miracle contrary to all visible signs of the times. In reality, unless allied with the Socialists, the PCF faces being wiped out of the strongholds it has won in local governments. To assuage fears of this looming defeat, the leadership accepted amendments to the effect that the PCF is still "a party of government" and thus will accept purely electoral alliance with the Socialists.

Finally, Juquin, Rigout and Damette were kept in the Central Committee, with a chasteningly low vote and a reminder they were to tow the line. This enabled Marchais to announce that "heads don't roll in the Communist Party," indicating that the three had been spared by the Party's "human concern" to let the wayward back into the fold. But 14 other less prominent fallen sparrows were swept straight out of the Central Committee. A few days later, Juquin was put in charge of problems of peace and disarmament, where his reputation for independence from Moscow could come in handy.

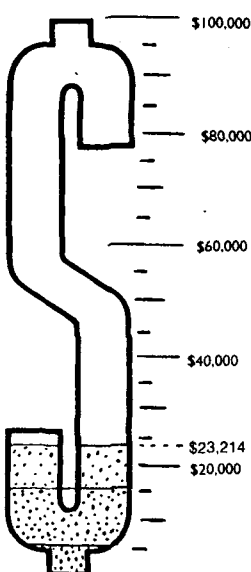
At the end of the congress, the 1,700 delegates gaily tossed scraps of shredded *L'Humanité* into the air to express their joy that the French working class had once more saved its Party from all its enemies. But where does the PCF go from here? Down, in the opinion of most observers. When the PCF was forced out of the government at the outbreak of the Cold War in 1947, the powerful Communist-led general confederation of labor (CGT) nearly paralyzed the economy in a wave of militant strikes. Today, CGT General Secretary Henri Krasucki talks of leading the workers in a "general strike" against the anti-labor policies of the bosses and the government. The likely starting point for such a protest action would be the Renault factories, where strikes began in April 1947. But the CGT had 5.5 million members then, compared to scarcely a million today. Workers are demoralized by a decade of lost battles and rising unemployment.

"The PCF has just passed a point of no return in its historic decline," commented Henri Fiszbin, former secretary of the Paris federation, whose fall seven years ago marked the defeat of the Eurocommunist reformers in the PCF. Fiszbin said that if party militants had been able to express themselves freely, they would probably have defeated Marchais and his team "whom they consider incompetent and responsible for the Party's woes." But the anti-Socialist party line would not have been very different, since proponents of left unity like himself have mostly left the PCF and those remaining are "sectarians," he said. He wants to lead a campaign to get disgruntled Communists to vote for the Socialists in next year's parliamentary elections.

The French Communist Party is quite bad enough without making it out to be even worse than it is, as journalist Flora Lewis did recently when she wrote that: "The party can no longer boast the glittering names from the worlds of the arts, literature and scholarship who recruited the ambitious young people of a generation ago. Until the '70s there was an intellectual tyranny in France that made it almost impossible to get ahead in these fields without Party patronage."

This is nonsense. Reading those lines, one can almost hear the charming French informant, "But my dear, you don't realize, we've been living in a *goulag*..." The left has had its share of mandarins in the academic feudal system, but it has never really dominated French intellectual life to the extent imagined by foreigners. It was the disgrace and defeat of Vichy that moved post-war French intellectuals (and others) to pretend to be more left-wing than they really were for so long, and not PCF terror. At best, PCF municipalities have given space to artists and performers of real talent genuinely aspiring to bring quality culture to the masses—an aspiration today largely dismissed as ridiculous.

The French right is currently tasting the joys of "coming out," exposing opinions that would have been shocking a few years ago. Values are being revised, history rewritten. In a vain attempt to keep up flagging morale, Communist leaders still hark back to the Resistance, which gave the PCF a power of attraction and moral capital that lasted a long time. But like all things, the prestige of the Resistance is also wearing out, and empty incantation only hastens the process. ■



In the past two weeks, 645 subscribers have sent in another \$6,726 for our \$100,000 fund drive. That brings our total contributions so far to \$22,809, from 1,027 contributors. In addition, we have pledges for \$405, for a not-so-grand total of \$23,214.

On the sustainer front we are doing a bit better, with 31 new sustainers, for a total of 381. We are aiming at having 400 sustainers.

It doesn't take an Einstein to see that we will probably not reach our goal of \$100,000 in the next few weeks. That will pretty much assure another, much more urgent appeal later in the year. How urgent will depend on how much closer we get to our goal. So, please, help save yourself from our whining, dunning appeals, and send a fat check today. Isn't it worth it to keep the one remaining new publication on the left in a situation where it can devote its energies to keeping you informed, rather than to scrounging and begging for money?

## IN THESE TIMES

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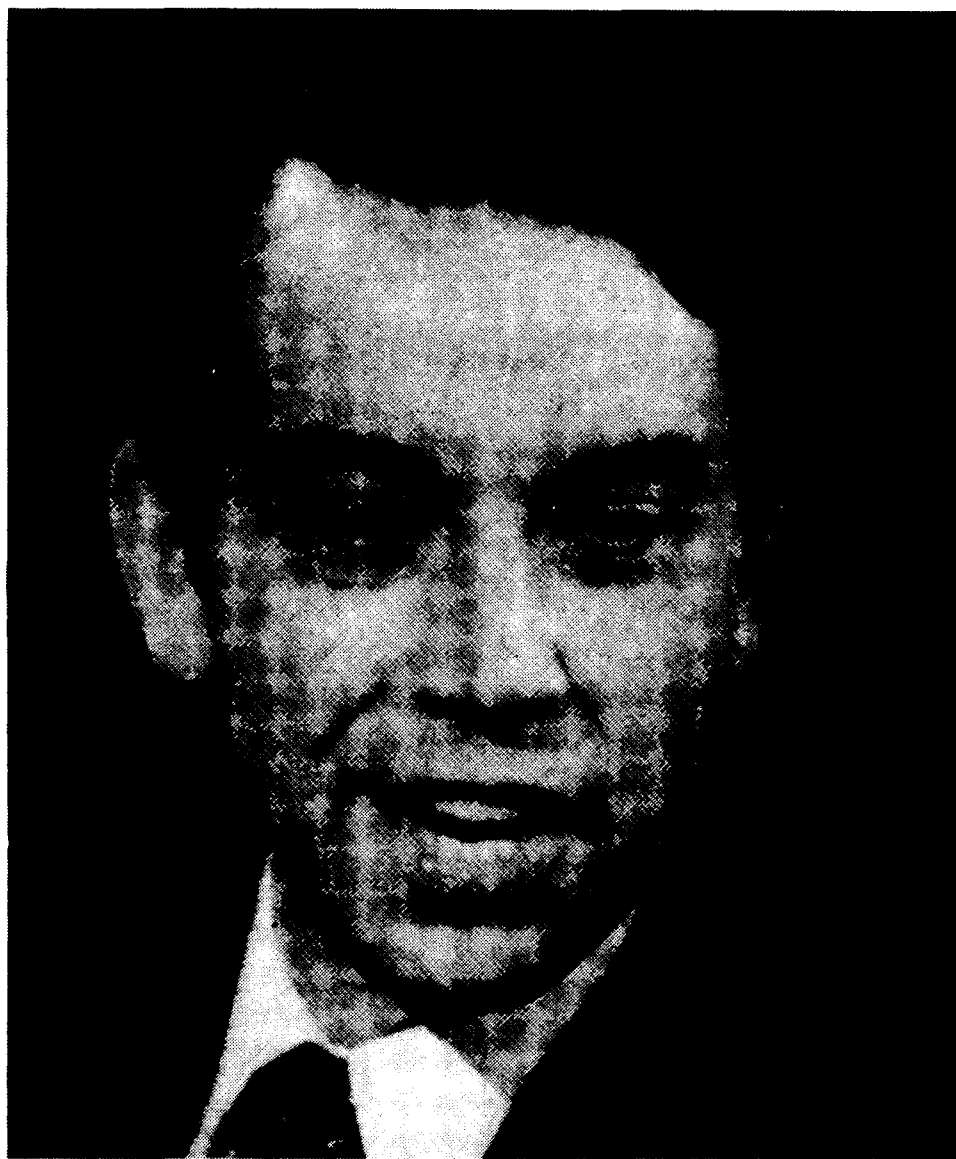
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# Conservatives bask in their "golden age"



Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley repeatedly attacked the waste in the Pentagon budget.

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**A**S THE BATTLE FOR THE 1988 Republican presidential nomination nears, conservatives will be at each other's throats over rival candidates and programs. But in the first months after Ronald Reagan's landslide re-election, they appear to have put their usual quarrels in the background.

This year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, sponsored by the Young Americans for Freedom, American Conservative Union, *Human Events* and *National Review*, was characterized by unusual amity among the participants and speakers. Gone were the New Right's threats of a "populist conservative" third party. And gone were the pleas to Reagan's "pragmatic" advisors to "let Reagan be Reagan."

The several hundred activists who attended the February 28 and March 1-2 CPAC appeared to be mollified by administration emphasis on the "Strategic Defense Initiative" and the MX rather than on arms control and by the president's spirited defense of the Nicaraguan *contras*. (In his March 1 address to the conference, Reagan called the *contras* "the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers and the brave men and women of the French Resistance.") They have also been pleased by the appointment of right-wing columnist and media-baiter Patrick Buchanan as White House communications director.

Conservatives also seem to have reached a new psychological plateau. When Reagan first won in 1980, many of them reacted with gloom and foreboding, as if that victory would soon be snatched away by wily liberals and by unprincipled pragmatists within the administration. But after Reagan's second landslide, continued Republican control of the Senate and profound Democratic disarray, conservatives finally believe that history is on their side.

William Rusher, columnist and publisher of *National Review*, set the tone of the conference in his keynote address. "I think we

have to appreciate that one of the moments we are now in will be called the Golden Age," he said. While warning that Democrats would "sooner or later find some combination to work their way back in," Rusher pronounced that the political enemy of conservatism, Democratic liberalism, is dead.

"Liberals are in a state approaching moral collapse," Rusher said. "It is much more than losing politically. The real moment of victory is when one side achieves psychological dominance. At some point, the steam goes out of their cause. They know they have failed."

## Helms tries to drum up support for CBS takeover

For many conservatives, the only remaining liberal redoubt is what they call the "elite media"—the three major television networks, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Besides the *Washington Post*, which many conservatives still blame for deposing Richard Nixon, CBS News has always incurred the conservatives' greatest wrath.

Gen. William Westmoreland's unsuccessful libel suit against CBS for a January 1982 broadcast that charged Westmoreland with deliberately understating Viet Cong troop strength was inspired by a conservative public-interest firm in Washington, the Capital Legal Foundation, and funded by New Right philanthropists. Last month a new organization, Fairness in Media, a byproduct of Sen. Jesse Helms' Congressional Club, launched a drive to take over CBS by buying majority shares in it.

At the CPAC conference, Helms sought to drum up support for the takeover attempt. He attacked the media for being too powerful ("Our founding fathers never expected the news media to become a fourth branch of government") and for the way the media uses its power. He accused the media of waging "psychological war-

Rusher argued that on such issues as abortion, taxes and nuclear deterrence, conservatives had captured the "moral ground" from liberals. "Ronald Reagan won the argument [over nuclear deterrence] on March 23 [1983] when he asked, 'Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them?' They simply have no answer," Rusher said.

New Right pollster Arthur Finkelstein put Rusher's optimism in electoral terms. Finkelstein predicted that the two parties would continue to polarize ("The Democrats will continue to nominate the likes of Walter Mondale and the Pepsi Lady") and that the conservative margin would grow. Finkelstein thought that the Republicans would do well in the 1986 Senate races, even though 22 Republican-held seats and only 12 Democratic seats will be at stake. According to Finkelstein, the Republicans will hold most of their own, while the Democrats are now vulnerable in Louisiana, Missouri, Colorado (with incumbents retiring or likely to retire), California and Ohio, where Democratic incumbents Alan Cranston and John Glenn have been sullied by unsuccessful presidential bids.

Even Howard Phillips, the New Right chair of the Conservative Caucus and a strident critic of the Reagan administration, failed to sound the alarm at CPAC. At last year's CPAC, Phillips had announced a new third party, but this year he parenthetically mentioned a "committee" that would aid conservatives regardless of party. Phillips ignored Reagan (in 1984 he had compared him to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain) and focused his wrath on moderate Republicans like Connecticut Sen. Lowell Weicker. ("Our greatest failure in 1982 was not committing sufficient resources to ensure the defeat of Weicker.")

There was some disagreement among the speakers over the administration's fiscal policy. In a February 28 speech, Rep. Jack Kemp staked out a position that downplayed the importance of deficits and emphasized tax reform as a means to encourage economic growth. Other speakers like Phillips saw looming deficits as the principal threat to the administration's economic program and counselled draconian reduc-

tions in social spending.

The most unexpected disagreement came over military spending. In a panel discussion with Gen. Daniel Graham and Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Ty McCoy, Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley repeatedly attacked the waste in the Pentagon budget. "The weakness of our position as conservatives is to equate a larger defense budget with a stronger defense," he said. "We are now spending more and getting less than the Carter administration did. The defense spending increases have gone into higher costs and overheads."

To the consternation of Graham and McCoy, Grassley called for a freeze on the Pentagon budget in order to "force reforms" in the procurement procedures. Grassley's position recalled that of an older tradition of Midwest conservatism that was largely eclipsed during the '50s by the new generation of Sunbelt conservatives, led by Sen. Barry Goldwater and Reagan. In the '70s, it fell to liberal Democrats to make the arguments that Ohio Republican Sen. Robert Taft had once made against growing military budgets. But Grassley may be now reclaiming that mantle.

**"Liberals are in a state approaching moral collapse."**

At CPAC, there were surprisingly few references to the coming presidential contest, but the conference sponsors did take a poll of the participants. Among the 269 respondents, Kemp had 39 percent, followed by Vice President George Bush with 35 percent, North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms with 10 percent and former United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick with 4.5 percent. Bush's strong showing in this hard-right crowd surprised the event's sponsors and should lay the basis for a considerably less harmonious CPAC in 1986.



Sen. Jesse Helms

Ted Turner caused the value of CBS' stock to increase by \$100 million in one day.) The real purpose of Helms' campaign is most likely not to take over CBS, but to put it on the defensive—a purpose that it and the Westmoreland suit have already accomplished.

-J.B.J.

John Pierotti/Rothco



# INSHORT

Beth Maschinot

## Bum deal in Britain

The coal miners strike is over. That was the word in Britain on March 3, when a delegate conference of the National Union of Mine Workers ruled by 98 votes to 91 in favor of an orderly return to work, writes Jeremy Harding. The return, decided with less than 50 percent of the union's 187,000 members still out, is based on a "no deal" position over the National Coal Board's (NCB) proposed pit closure program. Instead, the union is hoping to fight pit closures one by one. But this leaves many issues unresolved.

The future of five pits announced as closure targets in March 1984 will be reviewed. But the NCB has already hinted at quick closures. Any attempt to shut these five pits will furnish a test case for the union's newly adopted strategy on individual coaleries. More important in the short term is the fate of 719 miners dismissed by the NCB during the strike. The NCB has ruled out any general amnesty, yet has indicated that local agreements over some reinstatements are possible. The backdrop to the reinstatement issue is provided by the latest figures for arrests (more than 9,000), charges (more than 7,000) and convictions (more than 4,000) in Britain's coal fields since March 1984. Both the sackings and the arrests are eloquent testimony to the bitterness of the year-long strike.

Men in Kent, Yorkshire and Scotland have already voted against a return to work until a general amnesty is granted. Picketing in Yorkshire and Wales on March 5—the date scheduled for a mass return—turned many union members away. It was estimated by the end of the day that some 27,000 miners—around 15 percent of the union's membership—had not reported for work. Commentators in Britain have argued that it will take several months for coaleries to resume working order. And nobody is prepared to set a date for a lasting truce in the industry.

## An insult with impunity

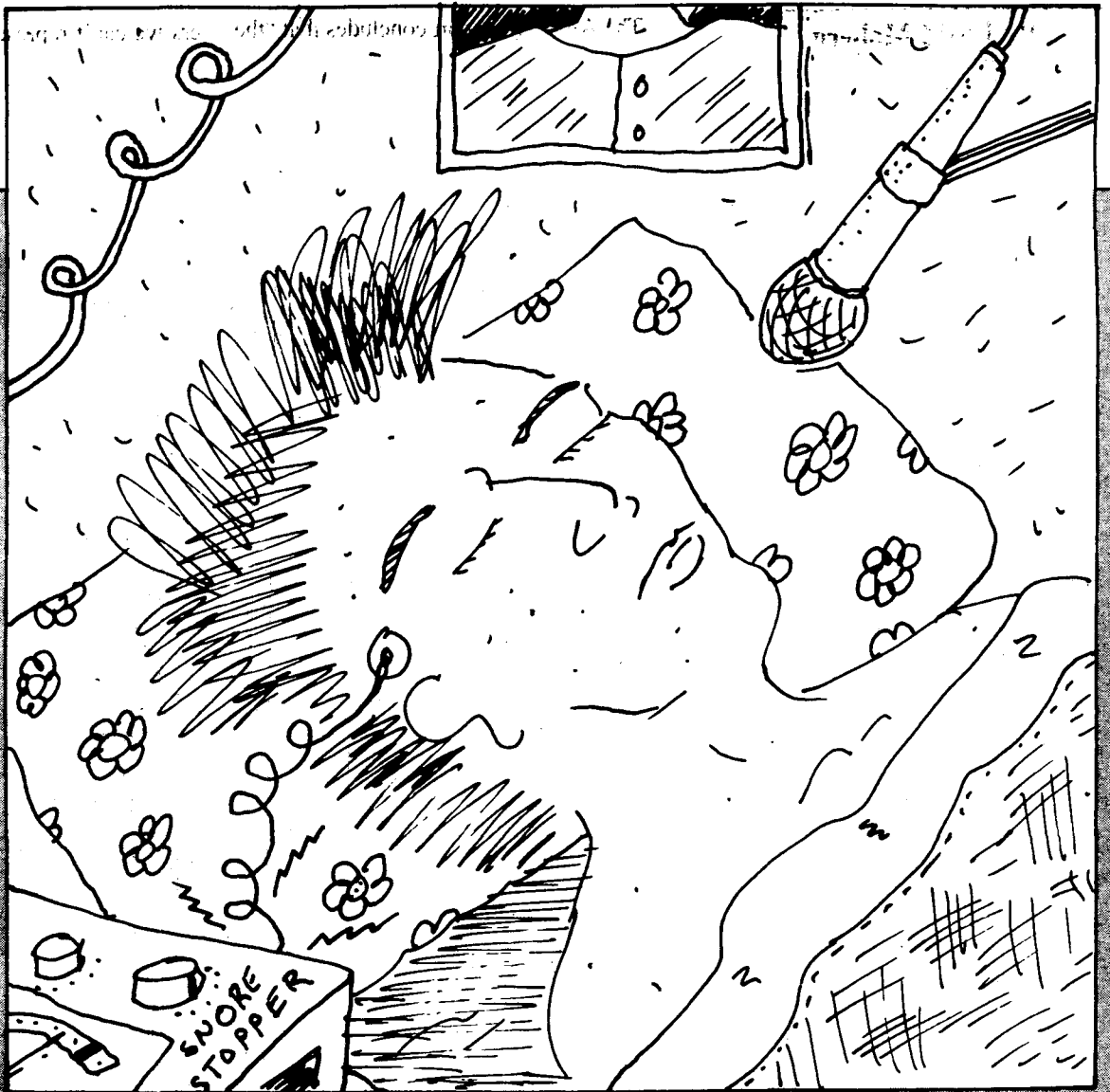
Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's insulting remarks about French soldiers serving in UNIFIL—the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon—has gotten a lot of play in the Israeli and international press, but has been handled much more gingerly by the French government and media, writes Diana Johnstone. While complaining to the Knesset's foreign affairs and defense committee on February 26 that UNIFIL interfered with Israeli raids on Shi'ite villages in Southern Lebanon, Rabin singled out the French as "the worst bastards."

Since Rabin's "iron fist" crackdown began February 20, some French officers have been roughed up as they tried to stop Israeli soldiers from destroying houses in Shi'ite villages. UNIFIL's Finnish spokesman Timor Gökseel said he couldn't see what the Israelis were complaining about. "They have full run of the place, they blow up houses, raid villages, arrest people by the score. They are an occupying force and do what they want. So who's interfering?" The French foreign ministry called in Israeli Ambassador Ovadia Sofer in hopes that a few words of apology for the rude language would bury the incident. But Sofer did not apologize. He stressed the need of Israeli forces to fight Shi'ite "terrorists" who are "the common enemies of France, Israel and the free world."

Rabin's insults seem all the more gratuitous because Mitterrand's government has gone out of its way to return Franco-Israeli relations to their pre-de Gaulle cordiality, the *rapprochement* aided by having Shimon Peres as prime minister. Last December, Peres went home from a trip to Paris with a French promise to deliver two nuclear reactors minus any international control requirements. (According to a recent U.S. study, Israel may triple its nuclear arsenal, now estimated at 20 atom bombs, in the next 15 years.) In February Mitterrand's favorite young idea man, Jacques Attali, paid a "private" visit to Peres in Jerusalem to discuss French loans so the near-bankrupt Israeli government could afford the reactors, worth \$2 billion each. Apparently, Rabin's rude remarks are irrelevant to the friendly Mitterrand-Attali-Peres connection, the real key to current Franco-Israeli relations.

## The inside story

While six Catholic bishops met in Washington last week for a closed hearing on women in the church, in



**The death tally** at Bhopal was closer to 10,000—not the 2,500 that's commonly reported, say Indians who plan to present their charges at a March 20-21 conference sponsored by the Worker's Policy Project, the District 8 Council of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and several U.S. labor groups. Bhopal, India's largest city, is the site of a Union Carbide pesticide plant.

eye toward preventing toxic accidents here and abroad. For more information contact the Bhopal Project, Project 44 (212) 677-1111.

**Rep. Robert Kennedy** (D-NY) by the House on March 11 last week for his harsh language. Kennedy had earlier clashed with his critics at a Washington press conference.

**War Tax resister** Rudy Meyer was recently fined \$135,000 by the IRS for "evading tax returns." Meyer, a freelance cartoonist in Chicago, sent IRS offices across the

country, a daily report of his income (averaging \$26 a day) with a declaration of refusal to pay.

**Bernie Sanders** was re-elected for a third term as mayor in Burlington, Vt. last week. The Socialist Sanders beat out Democrat Brian Burns by an unofficial tally of 5,429 votes to 3,095. Seventy-two communities in Vermont also passed a resolution

rain.

**The Rev. Douglas Roth** and four of his supporters were released from jail last week after a 60-day stay. Roth, dismissed as pastor of a Lutheran church in Pennsylvania for his militant activism for jobless people, was jailed for defying a court order to stop preaching (see IT, Dec. 19).

**Condoms can now** be sold in Ireland without a prescription, thanks to a \$3-\$0 vote in the Dail last month. The close vote came on the heels of a fight in which the opposition spared

no form of persuasion. Dublin's archbishop warned that Ireland stood at a "decisive moral crossroad" with the vote. More violence-prone foes called legislators and threatened murder if the bill was passed. Though a widespread practice of selling condoms over the counter already exists, making the victory more symbolic than real, it was nevertheless a heavy symbol for the Fitzgerald government. The decision has strengthened the belief of Protestants in the North that the republic was still under "Rome rule."

**Be the first** on your block: new inventions recently registered by the U.S. Patent Bureau include a toilet lid lock to prevent unwanted access to the toilet bowl, a combination deer-carcass sled and chaise longue, a baby-pating machine and an electronic snore depressor that gives the snorer handy negative reinforcement in the form of small electric shocks. Soon elbows will go the way of the appendix.

preparation for an upcoming pastoral, a group of 250 Catholic women and men met at a Lutheran Church to discuss the same topic—but with a slightly different slant. Marge Tuite from Church Women United captured the mood of the alternative hearing when she questioned the bishops' credibility. "When the bishops want to address the problems of black Catholics in the church they write about racism. When they want to talk about the hardships of poor people they write a pastoral on the economy. But instead of addressing sexism as a fundamental problem in the church, they discuss 'women' as if we're the problem."

The day-long testimony centered on some of the obvious inequalities in the church like the denial of ordination and the consequent loss of power for women and the church's staunch line on reproductive rights that has plagued Catholic women for generations. But more subtle accusations were also aired: one woman spoke about her mother's submission to violence from her husband because of her desire to remain a good Catholic and stay married. Other women were equally personal and open, something the organizers of the hearing say will be unlikely in the rushed, formal atmosphere of the "official" hearings.

The hearing was first planned for a Catholic church in the area but Archbishop James Hickey of Washington ordered the group to find another place to meet. The banishment proved to be a blessing in disguise, however, as conference organizers attributed the solid turnout to the publicity that ensued. The sponsoring group, the Committee of Concerned Catholics, videotaped the

proceedings and is urging women across the country to collect their own testimony to send to the bishops before the pastoral is prepared.

## Winning isn't everything

Nerve gas research has been banned in Cambridge—at least for the present, writes Tom Kiely. On February 26, the giant Arthur D. Little research firm, which has been testing chemical warfare agents for the Department of Defense, lost its court battle against the city's order to cease testing, storing or transporting the five potentially deadly substances (see *In These Times*, Feb. 27). Cambridge residents are cautiously optimistic in their estimation that the court decision is a major setback for the company, but not a defeat. Arthur D. Little Vice President Alma Triner said the company plans to file promptly for an appeal and will ask for a stay against the ban so that their research can continue.

More unsettling in Cambridge residents' view was Judge Robert Hallisey's outspokenness against his own ruling. While the ban is "valid and enforceable," he said, it isn't fair. The city did not adequately assess the risks of such testing before banning it, Hallisey said, and he urged the appellate court or the state legislature to rectify the situation. Cambridge residents, meanwhile, intend to keep up the pressure on Arthur D. Little. At a March 7 public forum on the issue, residents directly voiced their concerns to the company's board.



By David Moberg

**A**S PROBLEMS FOR THE LABOR movement have multiplied in recent years like fruit-flies on a ripe banana, many top leaders have refused to acknowledge that maybe they weren't doing everything right.

It's true that the biggest difficulties stem from a convulsive economy with high unemployment that has struck at some union strongholds and from the conservative political tide. Businesses have increasingly rejected the old, limited accommodation with unions and have gone on the attack. And unions have found, much to their dismay, the law stacked against them as they respond.

Yet the weakness of the labor movement and the low public esteem of its leaders reflect serious internal shortcomings as well. When the AFL-CIO Executive Council met for its winter session in Florida late in February, it received a decidedly unsunny report from its Committee on the Evolution of Work that was a first step toward admitting that some of the unions' frailties and flaws and seeking solutions.

"There are some real cold admissions of failure, and that's good," Machinist public relations director Robert Kalaski said. "It's a major step forward for that group."

Most of the recommendations remain vague and tentative. Some will be fleshed out in continued committee discussions. Even then, the AFL-CIO can do little to push unions to adopt any proposal. Yet the report gropes in a promising, if overly cautious way, toward more membership involvement in union affairs, recruitment of new members and a more innovative, effective unionism.

In the past, the labor movement was not as tied to contracts between workers and employers as it is now, which was noted by AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland. Its goals extended far beyond better wages and working conditions. Labor unions often were a center of social life, a vehicle for radically transforming society, a source of economic benefits and a means for creating institutions from cooperatives to banks.

The new report argues that unions should offer some form of affiliation to former members and others not under a labor contract, possibly offering services such as job information or benefit plans. Unions must also address such neglected needs as pay equity between men and women and workers' desire for a greater voice in the workplace, the committee of union presidents concluded. There are also problematic hints of greater cooperation with management.

#### Labor's dilemma.

Therein lies a dilemma. Many workers would be drawn to a labor movement that showed more militancy and power. Yet others are worried that unions have too much power already.

A potential resolution is suggested by one of the many unflattering public opinion surveys included in the report. "One fact emerges from the survey data quite clearly:

Non-union workers do not perceive unions as pursuing an institutional agenda drawn from the needs and desires of their members," the study reports. Members see their unions as more responsive, but if the labor movement were viewed—and actually performed—as a more democratic expression of the members, its power would be more appealing (although fully 42 percent of non-union workers have doubts about any collective action).

The problems of the labor movement, some of which the report summarizes, are familiar. Union membership as a percentage of the labor force dropped last year to 18.8 percent, down from 23 percent in 1980. Private goods-producing workers suffered the sharpest drop, from 30.5 percent unionized to only 24 percent, far below the relatively steady 35.7 percent unionization of government workers but above the 10.5 percent unionization of service workers (down from 13.5 percent in 1980). Worse, the new jobs will be coming in industries and areas that are the least unionized.

The AFL-CIO report concludes that "the striking new factor [at work] is a shift in which Americans are less likely to see work as a straight economic transaction providing a means of survival and more likely to see it as a means of self-expression and self-development." Although such an outlook has been strong for at least a couple of decades, the labor movement is now more openly acknowledging that it must respond to the "insistence voiced by workers, union and non-union alike, to have a say in the 'how, why and wherefore' of their work." The favorable comments about quality of work life (QWL) policies are qualified with warnings about employers using QWL to speed up work or avoid unions. But the report offers no alternative union approach, which might include the "technology bill of rights" developed by the Machinists or an insistence that worker involvement extend to decisions about investments and products.

The proposals for better publicity about union accomplishments could hardly hurt, yet union image problems stem from reality as well as misunderstanding. Although union members earn roughly one-third more than non-union workers (the union-caused differential is somewhat less), in recent years union wage gains have fallen behind non-union gains, hardly encouragement to join a union. Last year the major union contracts brought 2.3 percent annual wage improvements, the lowest in the 17 years of record-keeping.

#### Membership involvement.

Far more important, the report recommends that unions get their members more involved, finding new forums besides the ill-attended monthly meetings, bringing leaders in contact with members, surveying members' opinions, providing an orientation of union history and goals to new members, training stewards and members, and recruiting to the union workers at organized plants who are not members—as many as two million workers.

Some unions have already undertaken such projects. The Machinists are reviving a "grassroots" project to increase communication between members and local leaders that was cut back because of financial problems. Although still hurting financially, the union is now driven by "desperation" and "the question of survival," Kalaski says.

The American Federation of Government Employees also initiated a political education program aimed at mobilizing members. But its success created a problem: newly activated workers in some cases began challenging elected leaders. Creative democracy can threaten old arrangements, giving some leaders a tragic stake in a weakened labor movement.

Greater democratization could lead to policy challenges. "Our direction has always been to democratic socialism," says Dick Greenwood, special assistant to Machinist President William Winpisinger. "If [other unions] start democratizing their own grassroots, they'll start understanding more of what we've been saying." Already the greater collegiality of the AFL-CIO Executive Council under Kirkland has given more leverage to liberal unions critical of military spending. At its recent meeting, the Council reluctantly concluded that it was "left with no choice but to insist that if vital domestic programs are to be cut or frozen, defense spending must also be frozen."

A revitalized membership could aid better-trained organizers using new tactics from TV ads to polling, because union members "are the best witnesses of trade union effectiveness," the report stated. Former members are crucial as well. Around 27 million workers, 28 percent of all non-union employees, once belonged to unions but left, in most cases, because they switched jobs.

Although the idea of a loose associate membership appealed to some unions, especially in the public sector, there were critics. "We should be a union," said Allen Zack, expressing the view of Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) President William Wynn. "That's our number-one role. We shouldn't take money from work-

ers we can't represent on the job. [Wynn] doesn't buy the conventional wisdom that you can't organize workers today."

Indeed, UFCW had its best organizing year to date, bringing 58,313 new members in the U.S. Under Wynn's directive to avoid the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the endless appeals by management that can break organizing drives, 86 percent of the new UFCW members were organized outside the NLRB, often through organizing strikes to force recalcitrant employers to recognize the union majority support.

#### Corporate campaigns.

More unions have been applying pressure to companies through their financial ties and their links to communities. The committee report encouraged greater use of these coordinated campaigns, often called "corporate campaigns" after the distinctive model de-

Even innovative tactics, however, don't guarantee success. The Communications Workers (CWA) have supported a small High-Tech Network in Massachusetts, yet it is far from blossoming into a union. In its campaign to unionize Hanes hosiery workers, the Clothing and Textile Workers (ACTWU) used one of the committee's recommended tactics, first organizing around particular issues rather than the principle of collective bargaining. Promising as the strategy may be, it has not been a magic wand at Hanes nor at a small Indiana high-tech plant that was targeted by the CWA.

The report recommended forming special organizing committees, but Kirkland did not have in mind the Depression-era CIO committees but something more like the Beverly campaign—where a task force was freed to concentrate on organizing—or the Houston Organizing Project. Yet the Houston campaign has had limited success, and



## New AFL-CIO report outlines labor revival

veloped by union consultant Ray Rogers.

A joint all-fronts campaign by the UFCW and the Service Employees (SEIU) helped reduce anti-union activities by the nationwide Beverly nursing home chain. Since then the unions have won 70 percent of the 89 elections held and just recently negotiated their first contract—a sign both of success and of the great difficulties in organizing (recently unions have been unable to get a contract in 35 percent of the cases where they have won bargaining rights).

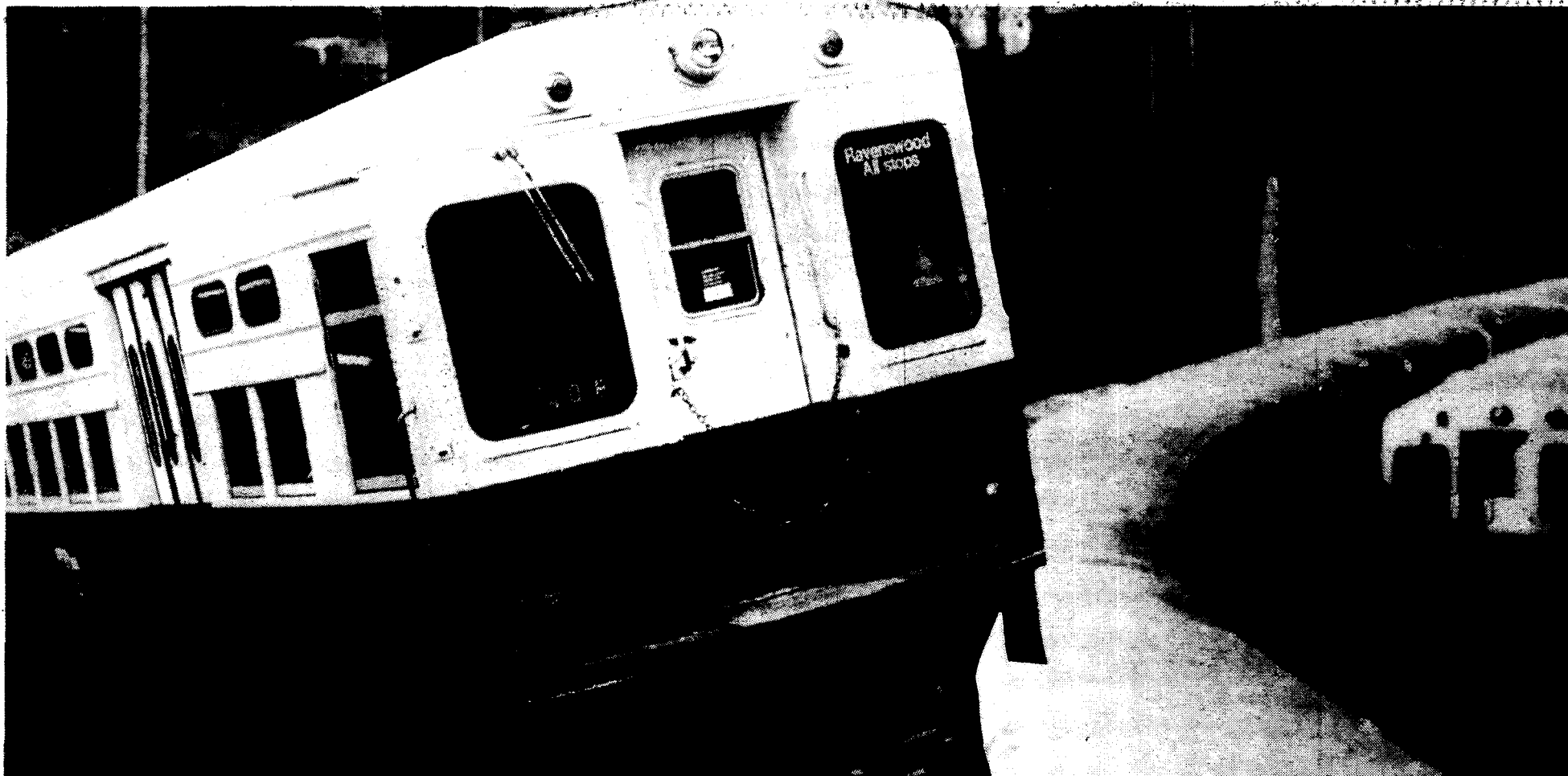
A similar attack on Equitable Life Assurance helped SEIU's District 925 win a contract in its Syracuse office, a small but significant breakthrough among women clericals in a largely unorganized industry. The committee report implicitly—but not very forcefully—argued that special interests of women workers must be taken more seriously.

two similar Industrial Union Department projects were canceled for lack of funds a few years ago. Many union organizers remain skeptical of the approach, despite its theoretical appeal.

Organizers must pick targets carefully, the committee concluded, giving special attention to small companies, where union organizing has been nearly twice as successful as at large companies in recent years. Despite the financial troubles unions now have with decreased membership, they will also have to spend more money. Real expenditures have declined sharply since the '50s and '60s, probably accounting in part for the lower rate of victory. (Unions won 46 percent of all NLRB representation elections last year, up from the all-time low of 43.8 percent in 1982, but there were less than half as many attempts as were made in 1980.)

Continued on page 11





By Sheryl Larson

**H**UNDREDS OF MASS TRANSIT officials from around the country are expected to descend upon Washington, D.C., this week to plead their case before Congress. Like other interest groups that recently came before them—farmers, for example, in late February—they hope to persuade Congress members that President Reagan's budget axe should not be allowed to fall on mass transit. The administration wants to slash federal transit aid by two-thirds of its current level, wiping out \$875 million in operating subsidies and sharply reducing capital assistance from \$2.7 to \$1.1 billion.

Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole and other Reagan officials recently cited the following statistic as one justification for the hefty aid cut: just 7.5 percent of the nation's 97 million workers use mass transit. Or in other words, American taxpayers are footing the bill for a service used by only a small segment of the population. But this U.S. Census Bureau figure distorts the real ridership picture. It represents a survey of a lone work-day, assumes people use the same type of transport each day and doesn't include those who use mass transit for any purpose other than to travel to and from their job. "If the administration wants to play the numbers game," says one transit lobbyist, "another way to look at it is eight billion times a year Americans step onto a transit system."

This is not the first time Reagan has eyed mass transit as one way to trim the bloating budget deficit. Transit was high on a hit list released in 1981 by the Heritage Foundation, an influential right-wing think tank. It argued that federal operating assistance, which began in 1975 and often helps transit systems cover such line items as labor costs, weakens a local system's incentive to keep those costs down. If the government restricted its support to capital investment, then state and local governments would have a much greater interest in controlling costs because they alone would be responsible for covering the deficits.

Acting on the Heritage Foundation's proposals, the administration asked Congress in fiscal year 1982 to begin phasing out operating assistance. The goal was total elimination of that subsidy by 1986; capital assistance would remain at the 1982 level.

#### Popular program.

But the president soon discovered that mass transit is a popular program on Capitol Hill, especially among Congress members whose constituents reside in such transit-dependent areas as Boston or New York City. So despite Reagan's repeated attempts to shift the entire responsibility for operating assistance to the state and local

## MASS TRANSIT

# Reagan cuts would spell hard times ahead

levels, Congress saw to it that transit funding emerged from his first term virtually intact.

There was a change in the way the funds were raised, however, and this could yet prove an albatross to mass transit. Originally, all federal transit aid—both operating and capital assistance—came from the general fund. But a second funding source was added in 1982 when Congress raised the existing 4¢-a-gallon tax on gasoline to 9¢. One out of every nine cents was earmarked for capital assistance to mass transit. After then-Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis assured transit officials that revenues from the tax would be added to existing transit funds, not replace them, they lobbied hard for it.

But the 1986 Reagan budget does exactly what Lewis had promised transit officials would not happen: it eliminates both operating and capital assistance paid for by the general fund and retains only that portion of capital assistance covered by the gas tax.

"It seems there was a hidden agenda in the administration's big push for the gas tax," said a transit official who requested anonymity. "It gives them a convenient way to now say, 'Hey, the capital assistance that we supported in principle all along is still in the [1986] budget—and you always knew we didn't support operating assistance.' But what they don't say is that because of the juggling of funds, they are now perfectly positioned to request less than half the amount of capital assistance we were led to believe they supported."

A similar sentiment was voiced by Albert Engelken of the American Public Transit Association, the principal trade group that represents transit systems and their supporting companies. "The administration wants to reduce the deficit by about \$40 billion," he said. "Federal mass transit aid is just three-tenths of 1 percent of the entire federal budget, yet the \$2.5 billion [in transit aid reduction] represents 6 percent of the total budget Reagan wants to cut. That's asking transit systems to assume an unfair share of the burden."

Transit officials claim the elimination of operating subsidies would mean hard times ahead for many systems, in particular those serving small- and medium-sized cities. In a large urban area like New York, federal operating assistance makes up only about 7 percent of the city's transit budget, ac-

cording to Transportation Department statistics. But the federal government subsidizes close to 50 percent of operations in a medium-sized city like Rochester, Minn. And the subsidy is even higher in some small cities. One irony of Reagan's transit cuts is many cities that would be hit hardest are located in regions that are gaining population.

Transit officials say Reagan's capital assistance cuts would be devastating as well, especially for those systems whose equipment is outdated and deteriorating rapidly. Many would probably have to forego scheduled purchases of new equipment or postpone other modernization plans.

If Congress goes along with the cuts, financially strapped transit systems will face several choices. First, they can try to convince state and local governments to take up the slack. But the odds are against success since many of them are also trimming their budgets. Second, systems can raise fares, yet this is no guaranteed quick-

## BATTLE OF THE BUDGET

fix either. Although no across-the-board formula applies, when a mass transit system hikes fares 10 percent, ridership usually declines permanently by 3 percent, according to Joseph Schofer, director of research at Northwestern University's Transportation Center.

A more promising way for transit systems to increase revenues and still retain ridership is to raise fares selectively, charging in proportion to distance traveled. Consumers generally respond more favorably to this type of equitable fare hike. A final option is to eliminate lightly traveled routes or restrict service to specific times.

Anticipating the Reagan cuts, the American Public Transit Association has been quietly lobbying Congress members since last year. But it stepped up its campaign in early February when it released to the media results of a recent survey of 152 transit systems that carry 75 percent of transit riders in the U.S. and of 63 manufacturers and suppliers that support the transit indus-

try. It forecasted that the industry will face a crisis situation if Congress adopts the administration's budget, and it predicted that the "aggregate impact will be a loss of support for more than 203,000 jobs and a loss of \$8 billion in private business revenues."

Joining the Transit Association in its congressional lobbying are the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Spokespersons there said that although they would ideally like to see Congress increase transit aid for 1986 above current levels, they would be greatly relieved if it froze spending at 1985 levels.

Several transit officials expressed frustration over the government's handling of aid in recent years. Since the late '70s, each time an administration has drawn up a budget, mass transit has been a target of sweeping cuts. This forces the industry to rush out and spend both time and money convincing Congress members to continue current levels of federal transit aid, robbing them of the opportunity to push for increased aid. Mass transit's scramble at each budget round spotlights the fact that the U.S. lacks a national transportation policy (see story on page 7).

#### The likely scenario.

Despite all the hand-wringing about federal transit aid cuts, it looks as if mass transit will once again escape Reagan's budget axe relatively unscathed. The most likely congressional scenario is a freeze on spending, according to aides to chairmen of key House and Senate committees. Yet the aides also indicated that some Congress members who usually support full funding are taking a wait-and-see attitude this budget fight: if Reagan will compromise on military spending, then they may warm up to the non-military cuts like transit aid.

Dale Tate, press secretary to Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, told *In These Times* that Dole "does not believe that Congress will go along this year with total elimination [of aid from the general fund]. Instead, it will probably be phased out over several years."

Another consideration in the transit budget battle is that of the 22 Republican senators up for re-election next year, 16 are freshmen. Since the Republicans don't want to lose their 53-47 Senate edge, the desire to protect those seats may sway budget decisions.

In a February 19 interview with the *New York Times*, Sen. Alfonso D'Amato (R-NY) summarized the politics of federal transit funding in this terse way: a budget that threatens to demolish a popular program like mass transit can be a blessing in disguise for Republicans. Congress members who vote to restore funds can then turn around and pose as heroes to constituents back home.





In These Times Graphic

## MASS TRANSIT

# U.S. lacks transportation policy

By Glenn Yago

**R**AILBASHING AND HIGHWAY porkbarreling have passed for a national transportation policy since World War II. Aside from an occasional wink and nod to transit, the Reagan administration's 1985 budget proposals further extend the logic of infrastructural disinvestment, transit abandonment, fare increases and service decline that have characterized U.S. transportation policy for years (see story on page 6).

Annual public investment on transportation as a percent of gross national product (GNP) over the past two decades has fallen by nearly 55 percent, and as a percent of the federal budget by nearly 25 percent. Disinvestment's cost is transportation's dead end. Forty-five percent of the nation's bridges are structurally deficient, more than 50 percent of all urban streets have heavier traffic than they were designed for and are, therefore, obsolete, 50 percent of the remaining intercity railroad beds and 67 percent of mass transit track need replacing just to keep operating.

Transportation costs as a proportion of total personal expenditures have more than tripled since transit declined in the '30s. Rural areas suffer from the lack of rails and roads—public and private transportation—since both bus and rail service have abandoned the countryside.

Rising auto costs, highway repair costs, transit budget deficits, unemployment in the auto sector, derailments and environmental national and highway safety problems indicate failure to address national transportation needs. Transportation debates orbit in predictable circles: should the U.S. invest in highways or rails, buses or streetcars? The energy and economic limits of highway dependent transportation suggests both are needed. The U.S. cannot sustain the status quo at higher costs, but needs to retreat rapidly from the obsolescence and imbalances of past transportation technologies. Highway transportation is not threatened by good rail transportation, but is endangered because rail transportation is not an alternative. The nation's private transportation system would be enhanced—not diminished—by the creation of public alternatives.

The luxury of an exclusively highway-oriented transportation system is now as obsolete in Houston as it is in New York City. The rise of the auto-oil-highway

lobby and subsequent motorization of the ground transportation system has reduced accessibility to jobs, increased travel time and diminished mobility. People travel more, reducing the time spent at work, with families or in their communities.

U.S. transportation policies have always been modally specific: a highway act here, a rail act there, a handicapped accessibility or rural bus act elsewhere. The federal government never has attempted to coordinate transportation investment into an integrated inter-modal system. The pointless auto versus rail debate needs to be replaced by an overall transportation policy that can insure equity and growth in the marketplace.

### Long-term costs.

For decades rail freight, intercity passenger and urban mass transit experienced capital flight. The same conditions that precipitated the collapse of privately owned rail and transit systems—lack of capital, reduced maintenance and modernization, rising rates and fares, and declining ridership—now threaten public sector transportation as well. With the onset of governmental fiscal crises at the state and local levels in the '70s, deferred maintenance became a short-term cost-cutting strategy. But as many state governments discovered and the Transportation Research Board demonstrated, every dollar saved in maintenance in any given budgetary year resulted in a \$10 expenditure five years later. That flawed budget-cutting strategy was carried to the federal level as well, emphasizing new highway and rail construction over maintenance and rehabilitation.

Transportation makes markets happen: it is an intermediate good whose effectiveness can link or limit economic activity. Lost work time and productivity due to traffic congestion and increased travel time, increased costs of vehicle and roadway maintenance, and energy costs in construction as well as vehicle operation all demonstrate that increased investment in roads and rails will revitalize American cities and regions.

Cities as diverse as Miami and Buffalo are constructing new rail systems just to relieve congestion and reduce maintenance costs on their extensive highway systems.

### Energy, equity and growth.

Without the economic and energy efficiencies available from a highway/rail balance, frostbelt and sunbelt cities alike will find their wealth cannibalized by energy and in-

frastructure costs. Two-thirds of the nation's growing trade deficit is still derived from oil imports. Seventy percent of oil consumption goes to transportation. For every dollar spent on gasoline, local economies lose 33-50 cents. Deferred maintenance and misallocated budget dollars fuel costs exponentially. Fiscal restraint today means larger deficits in the future as repair and debt costs escalate, and service, safety, ridership and revenue decline.

Land resources are also misallocated given the current structure of transportation. Half the land area of central business districts are devoted to streets and parking. As an array of federal and state studies indicate, agricultural productivity and costs are threatened by soil erosion, increasing run-off, pollution and the environmental impacts of increasing the number of highways in terms of residential sprawl.

Skewing transportation toward highway spending has resulted in an unequal distribution of transportation access on the basis of race, sex, income and class. Since the McCone Commission first pointed to rail transit abandonment as a probable cause of the Watts riots in Los Angeles, the issue of access to transportation in metropolitan regions has been raised periodically, suggesting how the lack of physical mobility limits social mobility.

Deficiencies in mass transit have created distance barriers for those who live far from job opportunities. With increased decentralization of workplace locations and concentration of low-income, underemployed residents in the inner city, a mismatch has developed between the location of the urban poor and possible employment opportunities. And exacerbating employment problems of the urban poor are intra-metropolitan changes in job locations, increasing residential segregation by income, age, race and class, deficiencies in public transit and lower rates of car ownership.

### Policy alternatives.

Crisis intervention (bailing out Chrysler or the Highway Trust Fund) and micro-management issues (route cost allocation and limited cost-benefit analysis) must be replaced by broad objectives and strategies that ensure transportation reconstruction and the survival of urban and rural regions. Post transportation policies encouraged concentrated economic power by automobile and oil companies and bureaucratically centralized planning, thereby reducing the

nation's flexibility to respond to new conditions. Complex funding formulae, protracted planning procedures and fragmented, uncoordinated policy administration discouraged the participation of citizens in transportation solutions and inevitably reshaped rather than resolved our transportation problems.

How can the nation bridge the gap between growing transportation needs and diminishing ability to pay for them?

Transportation is now financed through regressive sales and property taxes, deficit spending and trust funds. These fiscal instruments are as regressive as they are over used, resulting in income and regional consequences insulated from public control and market forces. The problem will not be solved by shell games of creative financing: beer taxes, cake sales to raise local matching funds, deficit-financed infrastructure bonds and tax-sheltered equipment leasing.

Financing transportation system renewal by treating infrastructure as a social expenditure from which private benefits accrue is fair. An increment of those benefits can be targeted and taxed at the local, state or federal level: real estate values enhanced by their proximity to transit corridors; publicly subsidized markets for auto, oil and rubber products; productivity savings due to decreased travel times; and wage subsidies to private employers through publicly supported fares.

While Congress argues over how the one cent federal gasoline tax will be dispensed to transit, West Germany has allocated over 50 percent of its gas tax toward rail and alternative transportation modes since the 1973 energy crisis. France and Italy both tax large employers for the benefits of low transit fares and extensive service. Canada has used special assessment districts to target beneficiaries for their fair share of transit costs. Japan has linked private land development and public transportation financing for years. The U.S. could explore proposals for taxing trucks by their weight and distance traveled, oil imports, and employers and developers for their transportation impacts.

Instead, each transportation bill becomes another Trojan horse for the highway lobby. Since 1982 the highway lobby has doubled its appropriations to nearly \$16 billion. Over the past decade about \$800 million in transfers from the highway trust fund were available for transit, yet only \$40 million was spent for that purpose annually. Current legislation will raid transit's meager funding to cover growing highway deficits.

Meat-axing rail and transit budgets will not lessen deficits incurred by highway dependency, nor will financing the last generation of transportation technology with the next generation's taxes.

**Glenn Yago** is director of the Industrial Research Project, SUNY Stony Brook, and author of *The Decline of Transit*.



## MISSISSIPPI

# Militant teachers' strike hopes to bring long overdue changes

By Hugh Merrill

ATLANTA

**W**HEN YOU READ THE WIRE service stories about the wildcat teachers' strike in Mississippi you get the impression that this walkout is not much different from most other government employee strikes around the country in the past few years. That's odd, because the strike is going on in the Deep South, where one would expect the teachers to be the last bastion of gentility and not unionists on a picket line. But other than that, it looks like the same old story: 90,000 students out of school, 4,000 teachers in 28 school districts demanding better wages and the governor meeting with key aides to solve the problem.

Yet beneath this facade there is another story involving a dual school system—one white and private, the other public and black—and a predominantly white state legislature whose leaders are from the Delta, a region that in one county has abandoned public education altogether.

Education has always been a step-child in Mississippi. For years, the state has been at the bottom of any survey of schools. Teachers there make less than anywhere else in the country and average pupil expenditure is below the rest of the nation. "Thank God for Mississippi" has become a cliché in other Southern states that are spared the ignominy of having the worst education in the nation only because they are not as bad as Mississippi.

But in 1982 the Mississippi legislature passed the Education Reform Act that upgraded teacher accreditation, made teachers more accountable for what they teach and gave educators a \$1,000 across-the-board pay raise. The new law also said the legislature intended to raise teacher salaries to the Southeastern average as soon as possible.

This ray of hope for the state's beleaguered teachers was followed by three years with no further action. According to John Thurston, an organizer for the Mississippi Association of Educators, the state was \$1,000 a year below the Southeast average for teachers pay a decade ago; today other states in the region pay teachers an average of \$4,000 a year more. The average teacher's pay in Mississippi is \$15,971. In surrounding states it's \$19,876.

Although most politicians are reluctant to admit it, the state's dual school system is keeping Mississippi educators poor. In the wake of school desegregation, private white academies sprang up all over the state, leaving public education as essentially a black-only province, particularly in the Delta and the northern Mississippi hill country. In Issaquena county on the banks of the Mississippi River, home of House Speaker Buddy Newman, there are no public schools. White students go to private academies and blacks are bussed to neighboring Sharkey County.

So in a predominantly white legislature with most of the leadership coming from Delta counties with private white academies, public education is not as major a concern as it is in other states. Although Robert Clark, a black legislator and chairman of the House Education Committee, introduced a bill providing for an \$8,000 teacher pay increase over the next four years, it was reduced to a one-time \$2,000 raise by the Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Sonny Meredith of the Delta County of Washington, who is white and considered the heir-apparent to the speaker's chair.

In January, it appeared that 1985 would

be the year of the teacher in Mississippi. When the legislature opened, the 3,500-member Mississippi locals of the American Federation of Teachers held an informational picket at the state capital in Jackson. Nine days later, the Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE), whose 13,000 members are affiliated with the National Education Association, held a Jackson rally where they said either the legislature votes for a \$3,500-a-year raise for the next two years or there will be a strike.

Teachers' grievances are not limited to salary increases, however. There is no statewide health insurance plan for Mississippi educators, and teachers have to pay into two retirement funds—Social Security and one for state employees.

The legislature said teachers' salaries could not be increased without a tax increase, and Gov. Bill Allain, ironically the MAE's candidate for governor last year, said he would veto any tax increase. A few days later, the legislature voted themselves a \$1,900-a-year salary increase plus added benefits and an improved retirement plan that gave each of them \$8,500 over the next four years. Then, Allain said the state would have no problem raising \$12 million for a proposed road for the gulf coast town of Pascagoula if a naval station were to be built there.

That did it for teachers in Stone County. Last month they announced plans to strike. But the MAE leadership, who finally called for a strike February 21, persuaded them to wait. Strike fever was building, and on Saturday, February 23, a Chancery Court

judge in Jackson issued a restraining order prohibiting teacher walkouts. The order did no good. On Monday teachers in three south Mississippi school districts—Harrisburg and Petal city schools and part of the Lamar County district—walked out. State Attorney General Ed Pittman said he would not prosecute teachers for violation of the restraining order, and by the end of the week 28 school districts were on strike, with more threatening to walk out after the expected lifting of the court's no-strike order.

Initially, most of the striking teachers were white, because there are more white teachers in south Mississippi where the walkout started. But strike activity is apparently not divided on racial lines. There is, however, some disagreement over which teacher organization did the most to encourage the militancy that produced the strike. Maryann Graczyk, president of the smaller American Federation of Teachers in Mississippi, says her group began holding "responsible militancy conferences" in early January. "Most strike activity is in south Mississippi because teachers there have been encouraged to be more vocal and concerned about their profession by the AFT," Graczyk says. While all school districts on strike don't have AFT locals, she says, most districts are near an AFT stronghold and that has encouraged militancy.

"That's full of shit, and you can quote me on that," says Thurston. "We are the group that was calling for a strike on February 21, before the restraining order. They have never come out for a strike. After the

restraining order is lifted, I think you'll see who the leadership is."

In some cases, school boards have supported the strike, occasionally urging reluctant teachers to walk out. And although the strike is characterized as "wildcat" because teacher organizations are under court order not to promote it, the MAE is apparently responsible for most of the activity. They were urging a strike before the restraining order was issued while the AFT was only calling for "informational picketing" before and after school.

And the general public in Mississippi seems to be on the side of the teachers. "People are eating better on the picket line than they are at home," Thurston said. Local union halls, in many cases, have been turned over to the striking teachers for meetings.

How long the strike continues is apparently up to the legislature. If a pay-raise package suitable to the strike leadership

## Grievances are not limited to salary increases. There is no statewide health insurance for educators.

were passed immediately and signed by the governor, the walkout would end immediately, Thurston said. If not, no one knows how long it will last.

Whatever the result, it is becoming apparent that, because of the newly found militancy of Mississippi teachers, "Thank God for Mississippi" may soon have a new meaning among Southern educators. ■

*Hugh Merrill is an Atlanta journalist.*

## CONGRESS

# Fate of MX depends on key swing votes

By David Corn

**S**OMETIME DURING THE WEEK OF March 18, Congress members are due to climb once again into the ring to slug it out over the MX missile. Immediately at stake is the \$1.5 billion in production funds for 21 missiles which Congress suspended last year. The coming votes not only represent the first major legislative test of President Reagan's second term, but they also may determine how Congress will treat the administration's request for \$4 billion for another 48 MX missiles contained in the budget proposal for fiscal year 1986.

On March 4 President Reagan officially asked Congress to release the suspended MX funds, setting the stage for a series of votes—an authorization and appropriations vote in each chamber. In order to win the funds for the 21 missiles, the administration must sweep all four votes.

With much riding on these votes, both missile supporters and opponents have kicked their lobbying efforts into high gear. The administration has brought out its big guns, sending Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State George Shultz and Max Kampelman, the chief arms negotiator, to Capitol Hill. At the White House, Reagan has been pushing the MX during a series of breakfast meetings with lawmakers.

The administration is trying to make the most of the fact that the MX votes are likely

to occur a week after the start of the arms talks in Geneva. This could buttress the don't-undermine-us-at-the-table pitch that the administration has been using.

Military contractors are also playing hard. Several have joined forces to put together an MX education bureau, which has distributed a thick briefing book to members. According to an anti-MX lobbyist, one House member, who has consistently opposed the MX, was flown by military contractors to a plant that produces components for the MX and told that a similar plant would be built in his district if the funds are released. But "he is still solidly opposed to the missile and says he has no intention of switching," the lobbyist reports.

As for MX opponents, they are trying to exert grassroots pressure on Congress members, particularly on "swing" members whose votes could go either way. Factors in their favor include the federal deficit, which has caused some members to rethink their support for the MX, and the procedure by which the votes will take place. In the past, compromises—most notably those engineered by Rep. Les Aspin—kept the troubled weapon system alive.

But this series of votes will force Congress to consider unamendable resolutions. "Aspin and others want to push a compromise," says John Isaacs of the anti-MX Council for a Livable World. "Yet they won't be able to do that with these votes." Nevertheless, suggestions for various compromises—such as tying the release of the

1985 funds to a more modest 1986 request—have been floated.

With both sides trying to figure out head counts, all that remains clear is that the votes will be tight. At the start of the month, MX opponents were claiming at least 51 votes in the Senate. As for the House, "it's as close as it can be," says Laurie Duker, a lobbyist for SANE.

Supporters and opponents are each concentrating on possible "swing" members. The following are considered "swings" by MX opponents:

In the Senate, they include Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), Sam Nunn (D-GA), Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS), Charles Mathias Jr. (R-MD), Gordon Humphrey (R-NH), Bob Packwood (R-OR), John Heinz (R-PA), Arlen Specter (R-PA), John Chafee (R-RI), Larry Pressler (R-SD), Daniel Evans (R-WA) and Robert Byrd (D-WV).

In the House, there are three categories of swings—those who have previously opposed the MX but who might fall into the administration's fold, those who have mixed voting records on the MX and new members who might join the anti-MX ranks.

The first group includes Mervyn Dymally (D-CA), Matthew Martinez (D-CA), Daniel Mica (D-FL), Ed Jenkins (D-GA), Carol Hubbard Jr. (D-KY), John McKernan Jr. (R-ME), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Wayne Dowdy (D-MS), Marge Roukema (R-NJ), Stephen Neal (D-NC), John Spratt Jr. (D-SC), Robin Tallon Jr. (D-SC) and J.J. Pickle (D-TX).

The second group includes Vic Fazio (D-CA), Claude Pepper (D-FL), Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Carl Pursell (R-MI), Frank Horton (R-NY) and Ronald Coleman (D-TX).

The targeted newcomers are Tommy Robinson (D-AR), Harris Fawell (R-IL), Kenneth Gray (D-IL), Jim Ross Lightfoot (R-IA), Jan Meyers (R-KS), Paul Henry (R-MI), Bill Schuette (R-MI), Joseph DioGuardi (R-NY), James Traficant Jr. (D-OH), Paul Kanjorski (D-PA), Albert Bustamante (D-TX) and John Miller (R-WA). ■



By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK, N.Y.

**O**N FEBRUARY 8 SOME 35 BLACK politicians, church people and other community leaders retreated into a union hall in Greenwich Village to choose a candidate to oppose this city's mayor, Ed Koch, in the September Democratic primary. Until a few days earlier, conventional wisdom had it that their choice was essentially limited to two—City Council President Carol Bellamy and former U.S. Rep. Herman Badillo.

Both were stalwart liberals and well-established critics of the Koch administration. Both had worked hard at building black support. And while neither has anywhere near the celebrity status enjoyed by the mayor—known to millions as a kind of combination Frank Purdue and Don Rickles—they were much better known than any other Koch challenger likely to enter the field.

But the black leaders, calling themselves the Coalition for a Just New York, paid little mind to conventional wisdom. Instead, they opted for the unexpected. They chose a relatively unknown, an obscure state assemblyman from northern Manhattan named Denny Farrell.

The result is another of those disasters that the liberal left seems to specialize in these days. The Coalition for a Just New York defended Farrell's nomination on the grounds of black political empowerment. But it was immediately obvious that instead of helping to weld blacks and other minorities into a powerful voting bloc, the nomination achieved exactly the opposite, raising racial tensions, this time between blacks and Hispanics, to dangerous new levels.

It also severely embarrassed those self-styled progressives who for years have cheered on the likes of Rep. Charles Rangel of Harlem, state Assemblyman Albert Vann of Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant and City Clerk David Dinkins as they set about building powerful ghetto political machines. Yet by engineering the Farrell nomination, Rangel, Vann and Dinkins have shown that they define black empowerment very narrowly—i.e., as merely more power for a few black politicians. Their loyalty is not to the mass of impoverished ghetto dwellers, to working people in general or to the political left. Their loyalty is to themselves.

From the outhouse to the political clubhouse: is it really such a surprise that big city black political machines are no less benighted and mean-spirited than the Irish ward-healers who preceded them by one or two generations?

### Political star rising.

In person, Denny Farrell is actually rather likeable. He is relaxed and personable, with a nicely self-deprecating sense of humor. He stands out at political gatherings mainly as a sharp dresser who likes to drape his long, lean frame in pinstriped suits and dress shirts with fancy French cuffs. Two gold rings shine from his left hand, a gold bracelet hangs from his right and he carries a silver cigarette case that he neatly flips open when he wants to smoke.

Politically, Farrell is a hack's hack. He got his start in politics in the late '50s in the traditional clubhouse way through an exchange of favors. In Farrell's case, the favor was providing uniforms for a Little League team he was coaching, in return for which he was expected to run a few chores the following November for the local Democratic bosses who had provided the uniforms in the first place.

Thus, after knocking around as a chauffeur and auto mechanic, Denny Farrell's political career was launched. His first serious political job came in 1966 when he was appointed a "confidential aide"—meaning driver, records keeper and all-around gofer—for a state judge. In 1971, the judge, Mitchell D. Schweitzer, was accused before a U.S. Senate subcommittee of taking a \$50,000 bribe to hand out a light sentence to a convicted swindler. Schweitzer was

suspended and then forced to resign amid a blaze of headlines. Farrell, who still sees his old boss from time to time, maintains that the corruption charges are unproven and "completely untrue."

Farrell was elected to the state assembly in 1974. In 1977, he sponsored the Neighborhood Preservation Act, a piece of legislation that funneled millions of dollars into local community development corporations, of which the Community Renaissance Corporation of Harlem-Washington Heights, Farrell's home district, was to serve as a model. Yet the corporation was a mess. Official inquiries revealed that financial records were not kept for years on end, taxes went unpaid, checks were waylaid and funds misappropriated.

Farrell was not personally implicated in the scandal, but he helped funnel nearly a million dollars in state money into the neighborhood corporation and, as Wayne Barrett reported in the *Village Voice* last month, hand-picked many of the corporation's top officials, including its first executive director, its chairman and its consulting accountant.

In 1979, Farrell was voted chairman of the powerful Assembly Banks Committee, and in 1984 he sponsored a sweeping revision of the state's financial regulatory system known as the Omnibus Banking Bill. The legislation demolished much of the state's Depression-era structure of financial controls and, at a stroke, made New York state one of the friendliest and most relaxed places in the country for bankers to do business. For the first time, state-chartered banks were given the right to invest directly in the volatile real-estate market, rather than confining their activities to the somewhat more stable home mortgage market, as federally chartered banks are still required to do. A companion bill currently before the legislature would allow banks to issue insurance as well, another breakdown in financial barriers very much in keeping with the current deregulatory atmosphere.

The danger of such wholesale deregulation, however, is that it comes along not when banks are fat and complacent but unstable and over-extended. The desperate search for new profits leads them into ever more dangerous, uncharted territory. And real estate, a roller-coaster business of dizzying highs and crushing lows, is one of the most perilous of them all.

### The "B" money.

Nonetheless, Farrell and his fellow legislators appeared unaware of their folly. At the Coalition for a Just New York's February 8 meeting, Farrell bragged of his friendship with Citibank Chairman Walter Wriston, the same Walter Wriston who led the world's bankers down the primrose path of international lending and is thus the man singly most responsible for what is potentially the most explosive financial crisis of all—the Third World debt bomb.

"When I'm in a room, if Walter Wriston sees me and I don't see him first, he comes across the room [to me]," Farrell said. He has told backers that while Koch will receive the "A" money from the financial community, he can count on the "B" money for his campaign. Already, he points out proudly, bankers contribute about \$10,000 a year to the Manhattan Democratic organization, which he chairs.

Thus Farrell hopes to represent an alliance between high finance and the emerging ghetto political machines. "I happen to believe that if I could form such a coalition,

**Black leaders nominated Denny Farrell to run against Ed Koch. The result is a disaster for the liberal left.**



NEW YORK

## Farrell's mayoral candidacy is divisive

it would not be improper," the candidate said several weeks ago in an interview. But such an alliance is more than improper—it's a rip-off and a betrayal.

Farrell's candidacy is nasty in another sense. After years of denouncing Koch as racist, the three dozen or so members of the Coalition for a Just New York have put on a display of rank racial chauvinism that the mayor would blush to follow.

"The question is simple," editorialized the *Amsterdam News*, a black weekly firmly in the Farrell camp. "As black leaders representing two million black people in the city of New York, how can these black leaders support a Hispanic candidate or a white and expect to sell that to their constituents when a viable black candidate has emerged?"

"Is it not also true that tribalism exists in the black community, white community and every ethnic community that can be named?" the *Amsterdam News* added. "It has always been thus and nothing has changed."

Thus, Bellamy and Badillo were rejected on the basis of skin color alone. Bellamy chose to gloss over the racial rebuff and declared herself a candidate for mayor with or without the coalition's backing. But for Badillo, the rejection was doubly painful. Without solid minority backing, his candidacy was finished before it began. And as the city's most prominent Hispanic politician, he had looked to blacks as the most natural of allies. Instead, he was rejected—stabbed in the back, his supporters maintained—simply because he is the wrong color.

Badillo and his backers were furious. As the erstwhile mayoral candidate recently told *The City Sun*, an anti-Farrell black weekly, "The damage done is irreparable, not only in terms of New York, but across the country. I don't know who they're going to get to go out and do what I've been doing for the past three years. I can't imagine who's going to go to Chicago [to

campaign for Mayor Harold Washington] or who's going to campaign for [Los Angeles Mayor] Tom Bradley."

A few days after the coalition's meeting, Denny Farrell rode downtown formally to announce his candidacy from the steps of City Hall. He promised to "expand his coalition to include Hispanics, labor, women, whites, Asians, gays and all others who see that it is time for a change."

As he spoke, a dozen or so hecklers shouted from a few feet away, traitor! and Judas!

### Koch as moralist.

The effect of all this is to leave the moral high road to Ed Koch. He has been denounced as a racist so often and furiously that most people have grown skeptical, including the 46 percent of black New Yorkers who gave him a favorable rating in a January *New York Times* poll. Koch told a press conference a few days after Farrell's nomination that voters "should elect someone not on the basis of their race, religion or sex, but on the basis of who's best.... If the action you take is not based on the facts but on the race of the person," he added, "that's bigotry, that's racism."

Despite his high-minded rhetoric, Koch has nonetheless poisoned the political atmosphere in New York as much as Ronald Reagan, without resorting to outright expressions of racism, has poisoned it nationally.

Actually, Koch was a kind of Reagan precursor when he was elected in 1977. The city was still struggling with the fiscal crisis that had nearly bankrupted it two years earlier. Koch balanced the municipal budget by eliminating \$1 billion worth of city services a year. Expenditures for police, firefighters, teachers and sanitation were slashed dramatically. He went after the municipal unions with a vengeance and took special delight in dismantling welfare programs in places like Harlem and Bed-

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## THE MILITARY

# Mock attacks on Soviets part of Naval buildup in the Pacific

*The fleets and planes of the two powers chase each other about on the high seas and elsewhere, snoop on each other, and take high risks in the process, with an intensity that could not be greater if it were known that war was coming next week.*

—George Kennan

By Peter Wiley

PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII

**I**N APRIL 1983, THE U.S. NAVY GATHERED the largest fleet assembled for a military exercise since the end of World War II. Three aircraft carriers, the *USS Coral Sea*, *Enterprise* and *Midway*, and 40 other ships rendezvoused for "Fleet Ex 83" near Adak, Alaska, in the Aleutian Islands. Once gathered, the huge armada—a staggering assemblage of fire-power including some 270 fighter planes, dozens of missiles and an unknown quantity of nuclear weapons—turned westward toward the Asian coast of the Soviet Union.

Thirty-foot seas rolled under the bows of the great ships and sub-freezing temperatures left a sheet of ice on the flight decks of the huge, pitching aircraft carriers. Adm. Sylvester R. Foley Jr., commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, was happy about the weather, however. This exercise was patterned in part after British fleet operations during the short-lived Falkland Islands war, and Foley wanted to see if his sailors could hold up under those murderous conditions.

As the armada steamed westward through the icy seas that define the only common border between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the Soviets were undoubtedly aware of what was headed for their coast. But they were forced to respond to a type of U.S. maneuver they had never seen before. Wave after wave of Soviet planes, some 90 sorties in all, was launched toward the fleet as it came within 400 to 500 miles of Soviet territory. As the Soviet planes roared toward the fleet, American jets lifted off the flight decks of the giant carriers and moved quickly to intercept the Soviets.

This element of realism during a frighteningly authentic mock confrontation was particularly important to the Navy. "We could practice with the bad guys," explained Capt. D.L. Strole, Pacific Fleet public affairs officer.

Fleet Ex 83 is part of a new approach to mock naval warfare that stresses flexible operations ("Flex Ops," in naval jargon). And according to Capt. Strole, Fleet Ex 83 "marked a turning point" in U.S. naval operations in the Pacific.

Although not directed as aggressively at the Soviet Union, Fleet Ex 85, which ended in January of this year, involved an even larger number of ships. At the end of the exercise, two U.S. carriers, the *USS Vinson* and the *USS Midway*, entered the Sea of Japan between Japan and the Soviet Union and sailed, according to the Japanese press, within 50 miles of Vladivostok, the headquarters of the Soviet Pacific fleet. Again, the Soviets responded by sending its planes out to track the American ships.

This encounter raised a flap in Japan. A Navy spokesman denied that the carriers were trying to provoke a Soviet response. "But from our standpoint," he went on, the Soviet response "provided a tremendous training opportunity."

These maneuvers are part of a larger pattern of militarization in the northern Pacific that includes, in addition to aggressive maneuvers directed at the Soviet Union, the deployment of new carrier and battleship groups at West Coast ports and



Central to the Reagan strategy is a promise to build a 600-ship Navy by 1989.

the accelerated rearmament of Japan.

These developments have not gone unchallenged in the U.S. and Japan. The Navy's plans to base new battle groups in West Coast ports have led to opposition in both San Francisco and Seattle. And the deployment of Tomahawk cruise missiles—approximately one-fourth of which have been armed with nuclear warheads and placed on battleships that will visit Japan—has breathed new life into the Japanese peace movement.

## 600-ship Navy.

The militarization of the northern Pacific is a direct outgrowth of President Reagan's call for rearming America and for a more offensively oriented approach to the Soviets—what amounts to a commitment to bearding the leaders of the Evil Empire in their own lair. Central to the Reagan strategy is a promise to build a 600-ship Navy by 1989 to assure the continuation of U.S. superiority on the high seas.

Included in the 600-ship Navy are plans to increase the number of aircraft carriers from 13 to 15. Two World War II vintage battleships, the *USS Iowa* and the *USS New Jersey*, have already been refurbished. The *USS Missouri* is currently being modernized at Long Beach, Calif. And the Defense Department is seeking funding for a fourth, the *USS Wisconsin*. Five of these carrier battle groups are currently stationed at West Coast ports. The Navy has designated Everett, Wash., as the likely site for another carrier battle group, probably to be built around the *USS Nimitz*. The battleship *USS New Jersey* is already stationed at Long Beach, Calif., and the Navy will decide where to station the *USS Missouri* by March or April.

This new Navy, built around aircraft carriers and refurbished battleships, has allowed the U.S. to "project its presence" throughout the world, according to Navy spokesmen.

"In remote corners of the Pacific," Adm.

**New aircraft and refurbished battleships allow the U.S. to "project its presence."**

Foley told a Rotary Club luncheon in Hawaii in the summer of 1984, "our ships and aircraft are doing a little power projection of our own, speaking clearly in the most dramatic way the kind of language the Soviet Union understands."

Foley sees the Navy's job as the lead branch of the military in the Pacific in politico-economic terms. To Foley, confronting the Soviet Union means protecting the U.S. and its allies' considerable commercial interests in the Pacific Basin. Foley often notes that U.S. trade with the Asian-Pacific area, which reached \$143 billion in 1983, outstrips U.S. trade with the Atlantic Basin nations; that the Pacific Basin is a major source of raw materials; that U.S. trade with Japan totalled \$67 billion in 1983; and that Japan's economic survival is dependent on its imports of oil from the Middle East.

For these reasons, Foley and his staff speak in terms of SLOCs—or sea lanes of control—the vital arteries of commerce. "We are in the business of protecting our sea lanes of control," explained Capt. Strole. "The Soviet Union is in the business of interdicting our sea lanes."

The Navy also thinks in terms of "choke points," usually narrow straits whose control is essential to the movement of ships and the flow of trade. One choke point in the Pacific is the Straits of Soya, between Japan's northern island of Hokkaido and the Russian-controlled Sakhalin Island and the Tsushima Straits between Japan and South Korea. The Soviet navy must pass through these straits to get from its main base at Vladivostok to the open sea.

The other is the Straits of Malacca, through which Japan's oil supply moves from the Middle East and U.S. naval forces must pass to get from American bases in the Philippines to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

## Foley in command.

Adm. Foley's appointment as commander of the Pacific Fleet coincided with the Reagan administration's announcement of a new five-year military program in 1982 that committed the U.S. to a more aggressive military posture. When Foley arrived at CINCPAC headquarters in Hawaii, he found that the Navy in the Pacific was both overextended and mired in a pattern of operations that was inflexible.

The Navy's problems, according to Capt. Strole, began with the triumph of the Iranian revolution in 1978 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the next year. The

U.S. responded by deploying a carrier battle group in the North Arabian Sea, and in 1979 and 1980 two carrier battle groups were maintained in the Indian Ocean. With six carriers in the entire U.S. fleet and two or three of them shuttling back and forth between West Coast ports and the Middle East, there were no carriers left to deploy in the North Pacific. Japan and Korea, Strole said, were asking about "their" carrier.

The Navy's annual exercises had also become routine and predictable. Starting with the mock attack on the Soviet Union in 1983 and continuing with Fleet Ex 85, Foley has made major efforts to change the Navy's fighting image.

The Navy describes its new posture as a response to the build-up of Soviet naval power in the Pacific. According to Defense Department studies of the Soviet navy, the Soviets began operating beyond their coastal waters in the '60s. They were particularly concerned with countering the U.S. aircraft carrier fleet and with establishing a naval presence in the Mediterranean in line with their efforts to play a greater role in the Middle East. By 1970 the Soviet navy was putting in appearances in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Africa and even in the Caribbean. By the late '70s the Soviet fleet had developed a strategic nuclear capacity through their large missile-armed submarine fleet.

The U.S. defeat in Vietnam marked an important turning point for the Soviet navy in the Pacific. Threatened by a major realignment of forces that brought China close to the U.S. and the continuing pressure on Japan to rearm, the Soviets moved into the power vacuum left by the U.S. departure from Vietnam.

At his headquarters at the Yokosuka Naval Base, Rear Adm. Gerald McKay, commander of U.S. naval forces in Japan, pictured the Soviets as "a formidable threat." "Russian forces have evolved," he said, "from a coastal defense force to a blue water navy." MacKay described the Soviets' Pacific fleet as their largest with 800 ships including two aircraft carriers and 125 to 150 submarines, 50 percent of which are nuclear powered.

MacKay was particularly concerned with a new force of about 25 Soviet ships that have been based since 1984 at Cam Ranh Bay, the former U.S. base in Vietnam. He sees the Soviets as now having "great capability to control the Malacca Straits," and this poses "a significant threat to Japan's source of oil" as well as allowing the Soviets to project naval power into the Indian Ocean.

The Navy emphasizes, however, that the Soviet navy still lags behind the U.S. Navy, despite its larger number of ships. "Their navy has been very much patterned after ours," said Strole. "Their ships have been built after ours." The Soviets have only three aircraft carriers, for instance, which are similar to the U.S. World War II-vintage Essex class carriers. They also lack the anti-submarine capabilities of the U.S.

Given the Navy's more aggressive stance and its fear of the new Soviet blue-water navy, Japan's strategic situation has taken on greater significance. After a persistent campaign on the part of the U.S., Japanese political leaders have agreed to accept new military responsibilities in the North Pacific.

Japan's military capability has been limited by the constitution imposed on Japan by the U.S. after Japan's surrender in 1945. In the constitution, Japan renounced war, the right of belligerency and the possession of war potential. Using the euphemistic term "self-defense forces," the Japanese now have the eighth largest military establishment in the world.

Under Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, the Japanese and the U.S. have reached a new military consensus. Pressure to rearm has declined and military leaders such as Rear Adm. MacKay, while acknowledging that the Japanese could be doing more, now find it necessary to explain that "an awful lot of members of our political world in Washington don't realize

*Continued on page 22*



# Unions

Continued from page 5

Unions need to make themselves more effective, the committee concluded, by encouraging complementary mergers, discouraging interunion rivalry in organizing drives (such as the very expensive competition for Ohio state employees between AFSCME—state, county and municipal employees—and CWA, along with other unions) and mandating national financing of the often neglected state and county labor federations.

It will be hard, however, to push through any of those changes. For example, although the pending merger between the Typographical Union with the Graphic Communications union (instead of the Teamsters) fits the new merger guidelines perfectly, the announced plans for merger between the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) and the Paperworkers is totally at odds with those guidelines. In addition, many in the OCAW are upset at the much more undemocratic constitution proposed for the merged union.

Initial reactions from organizers and lower-level officials to the report—or what they had heard of it—ranged from grudgingly favorable to contemptuous. "Even a dinosaur poked in the ass with a big rod will belch," one veteran joked. Another young organizer said the report sounded like "hogwash" and "platitudes," and others were skeptical any serious implementation would result.

Yet even if this report prompts more action than expected, some organizers stressed that the most important factor was not the new techniques or organizational forms but the substance of the union appeals and the political direction of the labor movement. "We have to recognize organizationally that we're in a larger community," argues Peter Cervantes-Gautschi, business manager of the innovative Santa Clara, Calif., labor council. "We have a responsi-

bility to that community, and our very survival relies on our relationship to it, to our support for working-class causes.

In Santa Clara County, the local labor council helped organize the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition against pollution by the electronics firms and has fought against Immigration and Naturalization Service harassment of workers.

Greater labor—management cooperation did not eliminate the natural adversarial relation, Kirkland said. "But that does not need to have any overtones of hostility, class conflict, per se, or any of those invidious considerations."

Yet many organizers, facing what even Kirkland a few years ago labeled class war from business, favor more militancy. "The laws don't protect us," Cervantes-Gautschi said. "That probably means a lot more civil disobedience.... You have to check with the union legal staff, but you don't have to do what they tell you."

The issue should be worker control, not cooperation, argues Anthony Mazzocchi, director of the Workers Policy Project and a long-time OCAW leader. "In the final analysis no one will organize mass numbers of people unless there is a sense of potency, and right now the labor movement conveys impotence," he said.

"You'll only organize when your members become your organizers," he added. "And you can only use them if they're turned on to the union. Right now they're turned off and alienated. The first step is democratizing the union." ■

# New York

Continued from page 9

ford-Stuyvesant.

The consequences were to be expected. Crime soared, the streets got dirtier and the subways continued on their long downward spiral. Not once, meanwhile, did Koch criticize the long-standing federal policies undermining the cities—the hidden federal automobile subsidies, the income tax home mortgage deduction, the abundant federal aid for new schools, new sewer lines and new highways while the old schools and subways were allowed to fall into disrepair. The overall effect was the mass migration of money, business and people to the suburbs, leaving the cities to starve and languish.

Yet Koch stayed silent. Invited to perform in an inherently unfair situation, he rose to the occasion. His aggressive use of tax abatement programs to encourage real-estate development has been especially embittering since most of the benefits flowed to builders of luxury apartments and upscale commercial projects in exclusive neighborhoods like Manhattan's Upper East Side.

Such neighborhoods already get the lion's share of city services. Their streets are cleaner and the police are more attentive and polite when they patrol sidewalks filled with matrons in mink and men in Bur-

berry's. Thus, the people who live in run-down neighborhoods in northern Manhattan, the Bronx or Brooklyn—where the parks are ankle deep in garbage and the streets so dangerous it is unwise to venture out alone after dark—are punished twice. Not only must they subsidize the construction of luxury apartments in exclusive neighborhoods, but also they must foot the bill for the extra services the wealthy demand.

To a certain extent, Koch's formula for economic recovery has worked. Investment began returning to the city sometime around 1977. The upward climb of the U.S. dollar beginning in 1980 has solidified New York's position as a world financial capital. These days, Manhattan has never had so many high-rises or stylish restaurants. Yet more and more the city resembles a Brechtian fantasy of urban horror with rich people in stretch limos racing past mobs of ragged slum dwellers.

The forces that are tearing New York apart along class lines—reducing it to a city of the very wealthy and the very poor, with an increasingly beleaguered middle class in between—are powerful and international in scope. Yet Denny Farrell and the misnamed Coalition for a Just New York can offer nothing other than racial chauvinism and competing with Koch to toady up to the banks. It is a recipe for disaster, now more than ever. ■

*Next week: See Jim Sleeper's perspective on the Farrell candidacy in next week's issue.*

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## By Doug Vaughan

**A**S IF BEING SIGNALLED BY THIS country's political turn to the right, a number of far right fringe groups—groups long dismissed as mere rhetoric mongers—are increasingly turning to violence to promote their version of the American dream. And it's not only those traditional forms of racist violence (anti-black vandalism in Chicago to defacing synagogues in Connecticut, etc.) that are increasing. New tactics of terrorism and outright criminal activity, most of which is occurring in Western states, have officials worried that the racist right is moving into a new and more dangerous phase.

Federal agents and police in at least seven states and Canada are investigating members of a neo-Nazi cult for crimes ranging from counterfeiting to the bombing of an Idaho synagogue to the machine-gun murder last summer of a Denver radio celebrity. The crime spree apparently was part of a plan to overthrow the government, as based on the plot of a racist fantasy novel. Federal agents recently arrested more than 20 people in seven states.

The suspected leader of the gang, Robert Jay Mathews, was killed December 9 after a 36-hour siege by FBI agents who trapped him in a house on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound off the coast of Seattle. Mathews' death capped a manhunt that followed a shootout with FBI agents who had tried to apprehend him two weeks earlier at a Portland motel. There agents also captured Gary Lee Yarbrough, who was wanted for allegedly firing on other agents near his home in Sandpoint, Idaho, last year. Both Mathews and Yarbrough got their start as neo-Nazis while they were inmates at Arizona State Prison.

When agents searched Yarbrough's house they found, beneath a shrine dedicated to Adolf Hitler, an arsenal including the weapon used to murder Denver radio talk-show host Alan Berg last June. Berg apparently was targeted for assassination because of his abrasive style and controversial opinions on such issues as gun control, birth control, abortion and religion. ("Until I know better, I'm it. I'm God," he was fond of saying.) Berg, who was Jewish, also had infuriated racists in widely publicized on-the-air confrontations with members of the Ku Klux Klan, whom he taunted as sexually inadequate and genetically inferior to blacks.

Yarbrough denies any involvement in the murder and police so far have been unable to place him at the scene of the shooting. But he has been convicted on charges of assault on federal officers and illegal possession of weapons by a convicted felon. He also has been charged with participating with Mathews and four others in the robbery of an armored car in Seattle this past April 23 in which \$500,000 was stolen.

What's more, he is a suspect in the hold-up of an armored car near Ukiah, Calif., in July that netted \$3.6 million. In addition, six other suspected members of the gang are being held in Seattle, and the FBI has launched a nationwide search for four others.

Investigators believe the gang used loot from the robberies to buy automatic weapons and explosives to equip a "White American Revolutionary Army" that would establish a "white" separatist state in the Pacific Northwest.

Sometime in late 1983, Mathews formed a secret fraternity called the "Bruder Schweigen"—German for "Silent Brotherhood." The group was to be the core of an underground army that would wage guerrilla warfare to "liberate" the Idaho panhandle as a base from which to establish a "homeland" for whites only in the Northwestern United States and adjacent border areas of Canada. From this "White American Bastion," Mathews and his gang hoped to lead a successful fascist revolution against what they call the "Zionist Occupational Government."

Even more bizarre, their abortive rebellion was modeled after a novel, *The Turner Diaries*, according to federal investigators. Published in 1978, the book has become a

blueprint for race war by the extreme right. It was written by William Pierce, head of the National Alliance, a Nazi organization based in Arlington, Va.

In the novel, Pierce envisioned an uprising of whites instigated by a Nazi band under the leadership of the fictional "hero," Turner. Fed up with "race mixing," the deterioration of the economy and the general corruption and decadence of society in 1991, Turner forms a paramilitary group called "The Order." Members swear a blood oath of secrecy and vow to punish betrayal by severing the head of any violator. They prove their loyalty in an initiation rite that includes the commission of a series of serious crimes—robbing a bank or, preferably, murdering a black or a Jew. The gang then conducts a series of daring bank robberies to finance purchase of weapons; it also raises funds through counterfeiting, an act that has the added benefit of destabilizing the "Jew-controlled" monetary system.

The Order pulls off terrorist attacks on public buildings, government offices, energy facilities, newspaper offices and the radio and television stations of the "Jew-dominated media." It also carries out assassinations of politicians, judges, prominent Jews and those who collaborate or conciliate with the supposed Jewish "conspiracy" that runs the country. The rebellion culminates in a chapter titled "The Day of the Rope," with irate whites rioting across the U.S. and lynching "Jews, blacks and mongrels of any sort." Although Turner dies in a suicide nuclear attack on the Pentagon, his martyrdom inspires a successful fascist revolution by 1991.

Like the fictional Turner, Mathews began by recruiting a small group of dedicated fellow racists. The alleged members of the Silent Brotherhood all were members of the white supremacist Church of Jesus Christ, Christian and its political wing, Aryan Nations.

Members of the group believe that persons of Northern European ancestry—the so-called Aryan Nations of Great Britain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries—are the real lost tribes of Israel chosen by their "Aryan Warrior God" to establish a racially pure kingdom in America—a word they believe stands for "Heavenly Reich."

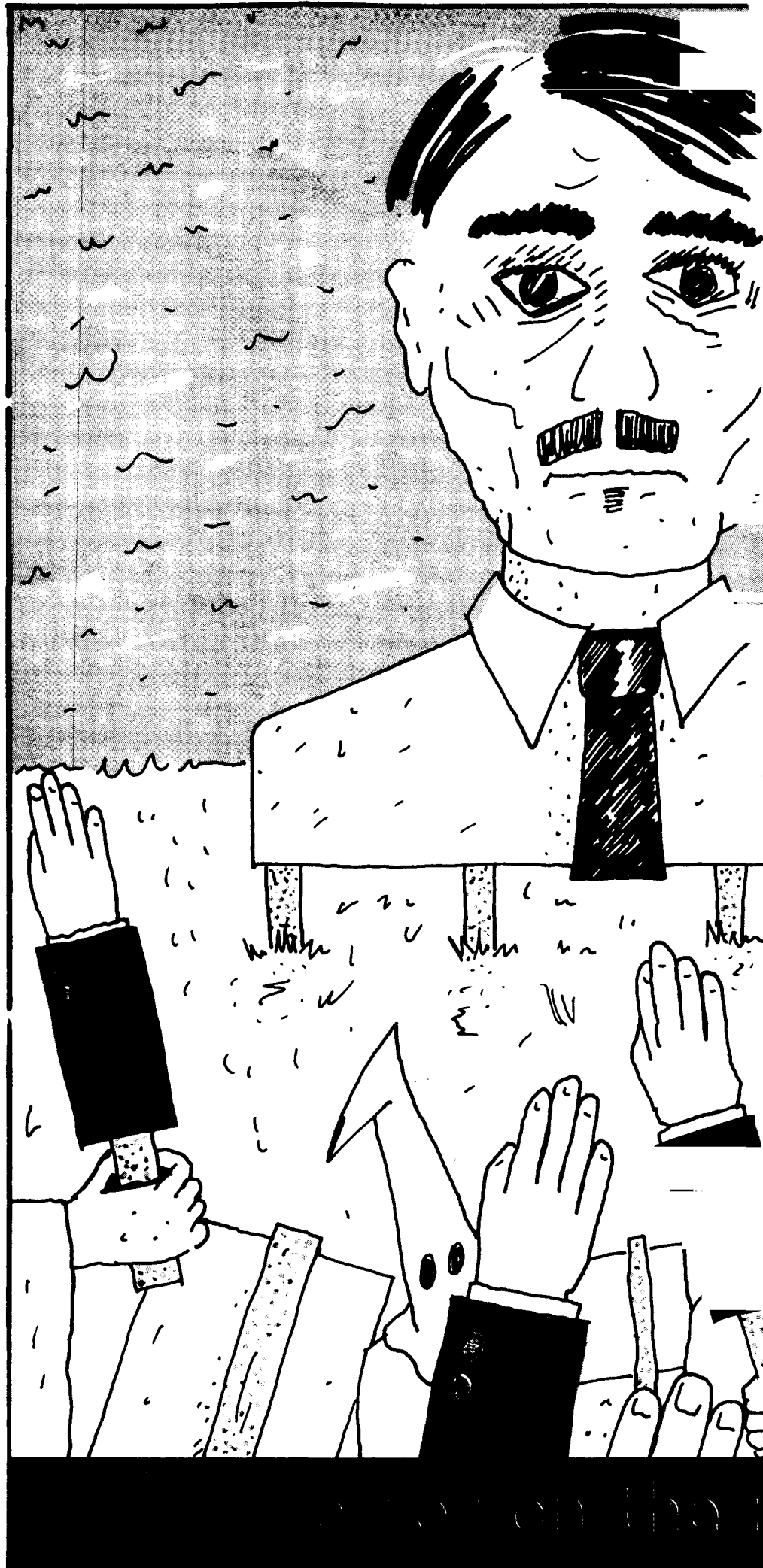
According to this doctrine, those who call themselves Jews are "imposters...the seed of Satan"—the literal offspring of the illicit coupling of Eve with the Serpent. Those with darker skin are considered inferior subspecies worthy only of serving the master race as slaves. The group interprets biblical prophecy as fulfilling "racial destiny," and those who deny this supposed law of God are considered "anti-Christ."

The fate of so-called "race-traitors" is spelled out in Aryan Nations propaganda: "They shall suffer the extreme penalty when lawful government is restored upon this continent." And for the Aryan Warrior, there can be no greater glory than to die like Mathews—a martyr in the holy war against Satan and his agents, including blacks, Hispanics, Orientals, Communists, gays, "race mixers," tax collectors, federal officers and the media, all under the supposed command of Jews.

The tree-lined road winds through Coeur D'Alene National Forest, through this otherwise nondescript burg in the Idaho panhandle, to the Church of Jesus Christ, Christian—the headquarters of Aryan Nations. At the gate, a bald man in storm-trooper costume checks identification of all who enter. Other men leashed to German shepherds and Doberman attack dogs patrol the chain-link perimeter of the compound, while another watches from a guardtower. In one of the clapboard houses, 14 children recite the four R's: "reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and race." (The state of Idaho does not require accreditation for this "Christian academy.")

Every Sunday dozens of the faithful gather in the chapel to raise their martial anthem, the Aryan Victory March, and hear their pastor, Richard Butler, pronounce the word of their god.

"God meant what he said, and he said what he meant," Butler explained in a lengthy interview. "The Christian scrip-



tures are the faith of our race, based on the natural, organic life-law laid down in Genesis. It's self-evident all around you in all creation."

No equal time for Darwin here: "Salmon are forever salmon, pintail ducks are forever pintail ducks," Butler insisted. And the corollary, he implied, is that whites are whites, and blacks are blacks, and Jews—who are not really Jews—are the "seed of Satan."

Welcome to the Heavenly Reich, the twisted world of the Kingdom Identity Movement.

"We're a dispossessed race now. We have no state for our nation.... If the white race is to fulfill its divine, destined purpose under scripture as God's word, it must have its own territorial imperative—a homeland of, by and for its own kind," Butler explained.

To the exclusion of others? I asked. "That's right," Butler said. And those who disagree? "He that denies Jesus, they are the anti-Christ," Butler declared. And what happens to those who disobey? "They will die. That's what the Bible says.... It's the natural order of life. It's self-evident. It's the automatic penalty for violation of the law of God." America, he said, is an occupied country controlled by Jews. "As long as this alien tyranny evil occupies our

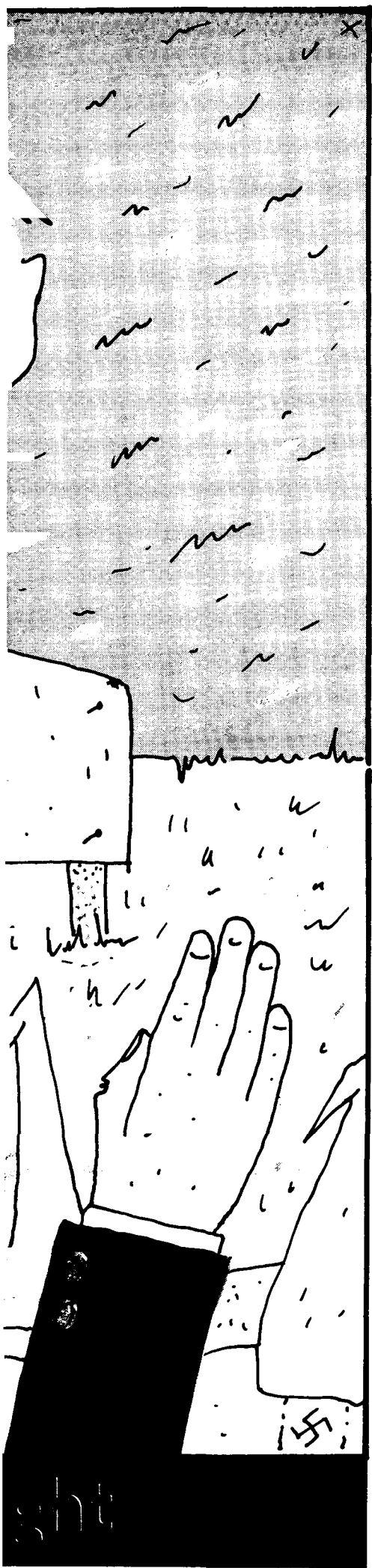
land, hate is our law and revenge our duty."

These may sound like the ravings of a crackpot to others, but to Butler and his flock, it's the Gospel. It's self-evident. "One nation, one race, one God. God gave us this land to establish his Heavenly Reich on earth. There will be only two classes—citizens and subjects."

Butler, now 66, is heir to a century-old movement that claims as its patron saint a humble paperhanger, a mystical vegetarian and astology buff who was born in 1886 to an Austrian clerk named Schickelgruber, who got a papal dispensation to marry his cousin. The bigotry at the root of Butler's diatribes traces back to Anglo-Israelism, a political and religious movement that sprouted in England in the mid-19th century. It interpreted biblical prophecy to mean that Anglo Saxons were descended from one of the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel. Jews, therefore, were imposters descended from the first murderer, Cain.

This anti-Semitic notion was revived in the U.S. by Wesley Swift, a member of the Ku Klux Klan who founded the Anglo-Saxon Christian Congregation in Los Angeles in 1946. Swift was the righthand man of Gerald L.K. Smith, a former aide to Louisiana Governor Huey Long in the '30s and founder of a Klan-like outfit called the Christian Nationalist Crusade, which





In These Times Graphic

to blow up federal judges in Denver who had been particularly harsh in sentencing right-wing tax protesters.

Butler, meanwhile, had studied the gospel according to Rev. Swift. He helped Swift organize another right-wing paramilitary group, the Christian Defense League, in the mid-'60s. When his mentor died in 1971, Butler inherited the congregation. His attempts to join forces with Gale's Posse and another Identity group called the National Emancipation of the White Seed were unsuccessful, in part because each group's leader wanted to be the Fuhrer.

In 1976, two of Butler's flock were convicted of illegal possession of automatic weapons; police seized five tons of explosives and munitions including machine guns, land mines and napalm from a concrete bunker near the "church" in Lancaster, Calif.

Butler decided to lead his followers to the Promised Land of northern Idaho, a more racially homogenous base than polyglot southern California. He established his mountain redoubt on a 20-acre parcel near Hayden Lake.

From there he put out his "Call to All Aryan Nations"—Klan factions, the Poses, neo-Nazi organizations and a gaggle of paramilitary "white Christian patriots"—to unite under his leadership.

He recruited followers like Keith Gilbert, who later founded his own Nazi faction in nearby Post Falls and began harassing local blacks and Jews. From the Texas branch of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan came Louis Beam Jr. Beam was already notorious for his role as Grand Dragon of the Texas Klan; he had been indicted in the early '70s for conspiracy to blow up a liberal radio station in California and another in Houston. (KPFA in Houston was blown off the air in 1971 and 1972. Charges against Beam were dropped, but an associate, Jimmy D. Hutto, was convicted and imprisoned.)

In 1981, Beam led Klansmen in attacks on Vietnamese refugees who ran shrimp-fishing boats in the Texas gulf—a campaign that resulted in the filing of a civil suit against Beam but no criminal charges, despite the torching of several boats. And he achieved nationwide notoriety when he used an Explorer Scout troop at an Air Force base as a cover for training a Klan Youth Corps in weapons and paramilitary tactics.

As Butler's "ambassador-at-large," Beam recently returned to the Dallas area. He hosts a weekly television show on a local cable TV outlet and operates a computer network for Aryan Nations.

The prisons of the Southwest provided two key recruits from the members of the Aryan Brotherhood, a fraternity of racist inmates that began in California in the mid-'60s and spread nationwide over the next decade. From Arizona came Robert Mathews, a racist with a long history of trouble with the law who worried that his newborn son "would be a stranger in his own land, a blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan in a country populated by Mexicans, mulattoes, blacks and Asians."

Mathews helped the church's "outreach ministry" recruit a buddy, Gary Lee Yarbrough of Amado, who in 1976 was beginning a sentence in Arizona State Prison for burglary, grand theft and possession of marijuana. Upon his release in 1979, Yarbrough used his on-the-job training in prison as a printer to set up the Aryan Nation's print shop. Yarbrough's press spewed forth racist tracts and titles like "The Negro: Serpent, Beast and Devil." Hefting a rifle in one hand and his baby girl in the other, Yarbrough told reporters he would raise "warriors" who would grow up "to kill niggers" and "to put bullets in the heads of kikes."

Not everything went smoothly in the Heavenly Reich. In April 1980, Butler and several followers were arrested for trespassing in Boise when the motel where they had planned to hold a meeting canceled their reservations following negative publicity in the local media. Butler and three subordinates were fined \$300 each. Two of the four also were convicted of carrying concealed weapons and received suspended

90-day jail sentences.

A year later, the headquarters building in Hayden Lake was almost burned to the ground following a still-unsolved explosion. Butler blames it on the Jewish Defense League.

The Kootenai County assessor's office threatened to confiscate the group's land for failure to pay taxes. Butler claimed that, as a religious organization, the church should be exempt from taxes, but a state court ruled the organization's purpose and activity are mainly political—a decision Butler attributed to a Jewish conspiracy in Mormon-dominated Idaho.

Perhaps most galling in the land they now call home, Butler's stormtroopers scared the Idaho legislature—among the most conservative in the country—into passing a law making it a felony to harass or intimidate someone because of their religion or race.

### Call to war.

By the summer of 1983, when Butler convened his second International Congress of Aryan Nations in Hayden Lake, his Aryan Warriors were preparing for Armageddon. (The first congress was held the year before

## The bigotry at the root of Butler's diatribes traces back to Anglo-Israelism, a political and religious movement in 19th-century England.

and attracted more than 300 representatives from more than a dozen groups.) Butler's "sermons" encouraged the more militant members, especially those with criminal tendencies, to believe the time for battle was imminent.

Rather than wait for the Heavenly Reich, they would usher it in with gunfire. Their homeland was occupied by "scum" and "aliens," they insisted, and must be purged of Satanic elements. Some of Butler's most dedicated followers were eager to move. In their minds, the time for stuffing pamphlets had passed; it was a time for action. "We will have to kill the bastards," Yarbrough wrote in an Aryan Nations pamphlet. "The Lord will guide my bullets and deflect those of my enemies," he wrote.

They were inspired by the example of Gordon Kahl, an Identity Believer and Posse Comitatus member who became the movement's greatest martyr. On Feb. 17, 1983, U.S. marshals and local deputies tried to arrest Kahl and his son in Medina, N.D., for violating the terms of probation on a conviction for willful failure to file tax returns. Two marshals were killed when the Kahls opened fire with automatic weapons. Kahl's son was wounded and arrested; he is now in prison.

The father led the FBI on a chase through the Midwest, hiding out at Posse "safe houses" until he was cornered finally in a farmhouse in the backwoods of the Ozark mountains and shot by a local sheriff—but not before killing the sheriff, too.

Whether Mathews, Yarbrough and the others actually "left" the fold of Pastor Butler is not clear. Aryan Nations is not so much an organization as a confederation of groups that share a weird religious doctrine laced with race-hatred. Elements of the Klan, Nazi factions, the semiautonomous Posse and "survival" groups set up by the Christian Patriots Defense League continued to operate independently. But Butler had infused them with a sense of duty, a mission and a mystical bond of tribal "brotherhood." When individual members got caught in a criminal act, the "church" could conveniently disclaim knowledge, even though it provided the inspiration.

Like the members of "The Order" in *The Turner Diaries*, the Silent Brotherhood began with a bank robbery. According to an informant whom Mathews tried to recruit into the gang, Mathews admitted robbing \$25,000 from a bank in Seattle in December 1983. A witness later identified Mathews

IN THESE TIMES MARCH 13-19, 1985 13 from a photographic line-up as the lone gunman who robbed the bank.

April 23, 1984, Seattle. Five men led by Mathews, all wearing ski masks, surrounded a Continental Armored Truck as it made a pickup from the Bon Department store in the Northgate shopping mall in Seattle. One held up a sign to the window that said, "Get out or you die." The automatic weapons held by the others convinced the guards to surrender. The bandits made off with more than \$500,000.

April 29, Boise. A homemade bomb exploded at the Congregation Ahayeth Israel synagogue in Boise. It was a Sunday, and the place was vacant and no one was injured. No one claimed responsibility for the bombing, but soon after police received an anonymous phone call from a man who said he had played golf four days before the incident with a man named David who said he was from Aurora, Colo., who talked a lot about racism and Nazism. Boise police have not named as a suspect David Lane, who is from Aurora, but they say they would like to talk to him about the bombing.

June 18, Denver. Alan Berg, the top-rated and controversial talk-show host on

KOA, drove home after dining with his ex-wife at a favorite restaurant. As he stepped out of his car, he was cut down by a burst from a submachine gun fired at very close range. At least 17 .45 caliber bullets ripped through Berg's torso and head. Witnesses reported seeing two men dressed in business suits in a car parked across the street from Berg's townhouse for about 20 minutes prior to the shooting. Denver police began questioning people known to have expressed antipathy to Berg.

One of the few avowed white supremacists whom police were unable to locate to interview was David Lane. The former Klansman and Nazi and Minister of Information for Aryan Nations was last seen in the Denver area the previous December or January. Acting on an informant's tip, police searched a storage locker in Aurora where Lane and two other Nazis were alleged to have stored weapons. But the shed was clean. Denver police also were told by the FBI that an informant claimed to have seen a list—supposedly compiled by Lane—that contained the names of Berg and two other prominent Denver Jews, plus a freelance reporter from Los Angeles who infiltrated Aryan Nations. Berg's name supposedly was "scratched off" the list. The Denver police never were provided by the FBI with a copy of the purported "hit list" nor were they able to independently verify its existence. But they warned the writer, Peter Lake, and offered police protection to the local Jewish leaders as a precaution.

When Lane's name began to appear in the local newspapers as a possible suspect in the case, he wrote a letter to the local media denying he was responsible for the Berg murder or the Boise bombing. "I wasn't even in the city of Denver when the late Mr. Berg met his demise," Lane wrote. "Had they cared to check, they would have found I was nowhere near the city of Boise [at the time of the synagogue bombing]." Citing the case of Gordon Kahl, the militant tax-protester killed in a shoot-out with police in Arkansas in June 1983, Lane said the media "apparently expect me to paint a target on my chest and march into federal or police gunfire."

*Doug Vaughan is a Denver member of the International Committee Against Racism whose work has appeared in major newspapers and magazines. A version of this article originally appeared in the Phoenix New Times.*



# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## Hostility denied

IN HER REVIEW OF LOIS RUDNICK'S BIOGRAPHY of Mabel Dodge Luhan (*ITT*, Feb. 13), E. Kay Trimberger cites my book, *The New Radicalism in America*, as an example of the "hostility that some male historians have expressed toward Luhan." She quotes a sentence from the introduction to my book and tries to give the impression that it gives my final judgment on this complex woman. The words she quotes refer to Luhan as an "extremely neurotic woman with an irregular emotional history." But the context makes my intention clear: not to discredit her but to defend my decision to write about people who were in no way "typical of their times." In the same sentence I referred to Randolph Bourne as a "hunchbacked dwarf." Does anyone think these words represent my final judgment on Bourne?

Trimberger claims I dismiss Luhan's autobiography, *Intimate Memories*, as "depressing and banal." On the contrary, my interpretation tried to account precisely for "what rescued *Intimate Memories* from banality." Professor Trimberger should read more carefully. As for the other adjective, it was D.H. Lawrence who first characterized *Intimate Memories* as a depressing book, and Luhan herself, I argued, was inclined to agree. "It was indeed the happy woman who has no history, for by happy we mean the loving and beloved, and by history we designate all those relatable occurrences on earth caused by the human energies seeking other outlets than the biological one.... That I have so many pages to write signifies, solely, that I was unlucky in love. Most of the pages are about what I did instead."

According to Luhan, thwarted sexual drives find outlets in the struggle for power over others. She saw her story as one long proof of this point. The best authority on her "will-to-power" remains Luhan herself.

There is nothing banal about her book. With *is* banal is to see this remarkably able and gifted writer as one more victim of sexual oppression, denied an opportunity to "channel her energy, intelligence and creativity into satisfying work of her own," as Trimberger writes. On the contrary, Luhan found "satisfying work" as the author of *Intimate Memories*. Authorship rescued her life from banality.

Christopher Lasch  
Rochester, N.Y.

## Nostra culpa

I CANNOT ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE MY feelings after reading your stunning expose of John Paul II (*ITT*, Feb. 13). This blunt language ("The Pope sounded more

like a social reformer than revolutionary") may be offensive to some, but it is precisely this sort of hard-hitting journalism that differentiates *In These Times* from other left publications, *Chicago Catholic*, for instance.

Billy Ketchum  
Chicago

P.S. Didn't Voltaire say something about autocrats and priestly intestines?

## The best

JOAN WALSH IN HER ARTICLE ON ABORTION (*ITT*, Jan. 30) was good at showing us that there are basically five positions that people take on the abortion debate.

1. Total ban.
2. Near ban, except for extraordinary conditions.
3. No subsidy for abortion.
4. The Supreme Court's positions of *Wade vs. Roe* (pregnant women are free to decide what to do in the first trimester).
5. No restrictions.

It would therefore be helpful in the future if Walsh and other journalists would clean up their vocabulary.

There are no "anti-abortionist," "right-to-life" or "pro-abortion" positions. Even those women who have had an abortion, a painful experience, and who support *Wade vs. Roe* are not "pro-abortion." The term "right-to-life" gives the fanatics an appearance of strength that they do not have. There are no "movements" but specific pressure groups with official titles. The slogan "abortion on demand" sneers at a woman's rights. What do the feminists demand? And why is it presumed illegitimate to regulate one's own sex life or family responsibilities? Bearing a child is an 18-year, or 66,000-day and night commitment.

This is the best article I've seen in years, since it defuses the emotional "pro" and "anti" polarized tactics that most American journalism indulges in.

Robert H. Whealey  
Athens, Ohio

## Fear of blacks

FIRST SALIM MUWAKKIL'S NEO-CONSERVATIVE strategy for blacks (*ITT*, Jan. 16); now his weaseling apologia for Goetz the gun (*ITT*, Feb. 6). Has the "if we can't beat Reagan, let's join him" movement finally recruited *In These Times*?

So the Hail to Bernie Goetz hysteria can't be racist because some blacks have also joined the chorus? Well, I broke into my class discussion on the topic—prof always gets the floor when he wants it—with a simple question: If this had been

a black man shooting four white young punks in the same situation, would our black vigilante have been transformed into instant hero?

First, an embarrassed silence. Then came the answers. Every white student, without exception, said yes, of course. Every black student said no.

Sure, violent street crime—whether black on black, black on white, white on white or white on black—bugs us all.

Just listen to the experts: "It has now become dangerous for anyone to be out late at night on our streets," writes one New York commentator. "There is one murder committed in our country every 40 minutes," the New York State Commission on Crime reports. So there's plenty of crime and violence on the record.

But that New York commentator wrote his article in 1745. The New York crime commission made its report in 1929.

Violent crime is as American as apple pie and from the stagecoach gangs to Bonnie and Clyde, folks songs and movies have glorified the criminals. Yet today, talk of crime is more inflamed, generates more fear and hysteria than ever before. And this fear is worse than crime itself.

Racism taints every aspect of the problem. We are told, for example, that while blacks comprise only 12 percent of the population they account for 32 percent of all arrests and more than 40 percent of those in prison.

But these statistics are hardly surprising in a society with a double standard of justice for blacks and whites. Black youngsters are far more likely to be arrested on suspicion than are whites. More blacks than whites come to trial and more are convicted.

Arthur Mitchell  
New York

**Salim Muwakkil replies:** Arthur Mitchell's cavalier dismissal of violent street crime (i.e., "Sure, violent street crime...bugs us all.") is all too typical of the left's traditional response. If the good professor were to take his research out of the classroom and into the black community, he would find people who are a bit more than bugged. In fact, most of those cowering behind locked doors are not the white racist paranoids he ridicules (though I'm sure they're represented), but the black elderly, black women and young black males—all of whom are inordinantly victimized by violent crime.

I'm sure all of this is not news to Mitchell, but he, like many on the left, is willing to tolerate fratricide while waiting for the revolution.

## What's good for the gander

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT PAT AUFDERHEIDE did not respond to Fred Whitehead's letter (*ITT*, Feb. 27). Her response could only have been an exemplary exercise in self-criticism. It is fortunate, indeed, for working-class women that critics like Fred Whitehead know what is good for them. It is also no doubt thanks to such bold unmasking of petit bourgeois art forms and false consciousness (etc.), wherever they may lurk, that the left en-

joys the great power and prestige in the U.S. that it does today.

Lev Bronstein  
Novi, Irkutsk

## The big lie lives

YOUR EDITORIAL ON NICARAGUA, "Reagan cast as King George" (*ITT*, Feb. 27), alludes to the apparent Reagan "theory that if a lie is repeated often enough...it will be accepted by the public at large." You don't know how depressingly right you are. A conservative newspaper columnist here in Boston now routinely refers to "Soviet troops in Nicaragua" as if that were universally acknowledged fact, like the heat of the sun, and not the wild fabrication of a Hollywood actor's deluded mind. The '30s technique of the Big Lie is with us again.

Gene H. Bell-Villada  
Cambridge, Mass.

**Editor's note:** Unfortunately, we do know.

## An Open Letter to the People of New Zealand

AS CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES and residents of Cheshire County, New Hampshire, we wholly and unequivocally support and endorse the decision by the people of New Zealand through your prime minister, David Lange, to deny port access to any ship (including U.S.) carrying nuclear weapons. In this decision, the people of New Zealand are to be congratulated. Your nation and prime minister have taken a constructive step toward real peace by limiting the global reach of nuclear weaponry.

Further, by your nation's courage, you have clearly demonstrated that people are making a difference. With your help, our goal of a nuclear-free world can be obtained. Opposition to nuclear madness is an affirmation of life and is imperative to the survival of our planet.

We vehemently oppose any retaliatory actions taken by our government against New Zealand or any other nation taking an anti-nuclear stance.

Eric A. Schutz, Joan Roelofs, Johnny Lee Lenhart, Dorothy Lenhart, Hope O'Shaughnessy, John P. Menapace, Beth A. Durant, Albert Munichiello, Barry Cotter, Mindy Cambian, Shirlee A. Ingalls  
Keene, N.H.

## Not slapped

IN BRUCE CUMINGS' ARTICLE, "THE REAL story behind Kim Dae Jung's return," (*ITT*, Feb. 27), he said that I had been punched and slapped. To keep the record totally accurate, I was not slapped. However, I was punched and I was pushed and shoved around and held cramped in the passage with the remainder of the delegation.

Lance E. Lindblom  
President, J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation  
Chicago

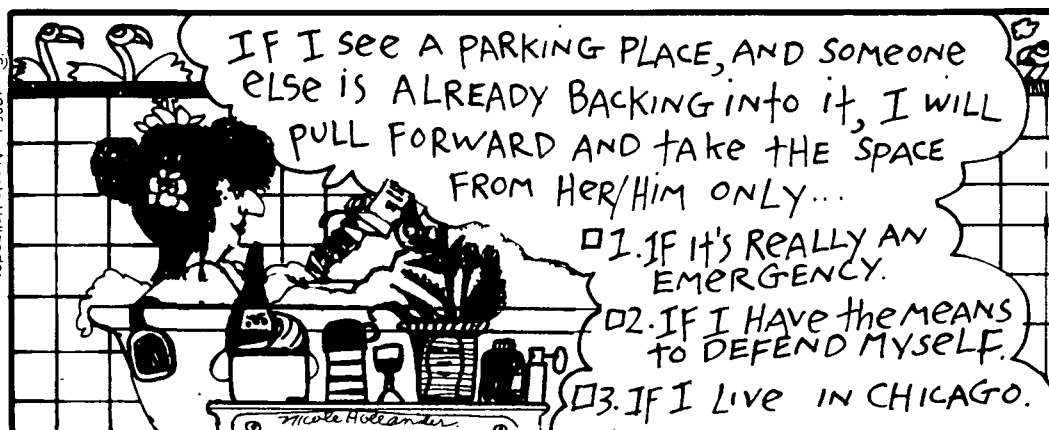
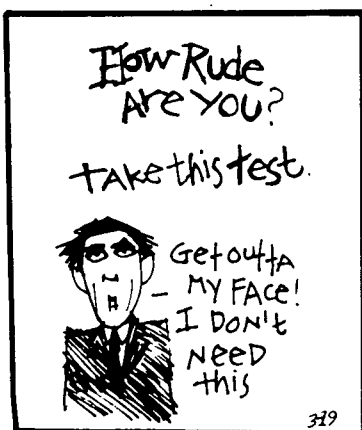
## Correction

BECAUSE OF A PRODUCTION ERROR IN Jeremy Harding's story about the British coalminers' strike (*ITT*, Feb. 20), the number of miners reporting to work in mid-February was incorrectly reported. It should have read: "The highest total figures for miners now reporting to work are put at 80,000 out of 187,000."

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

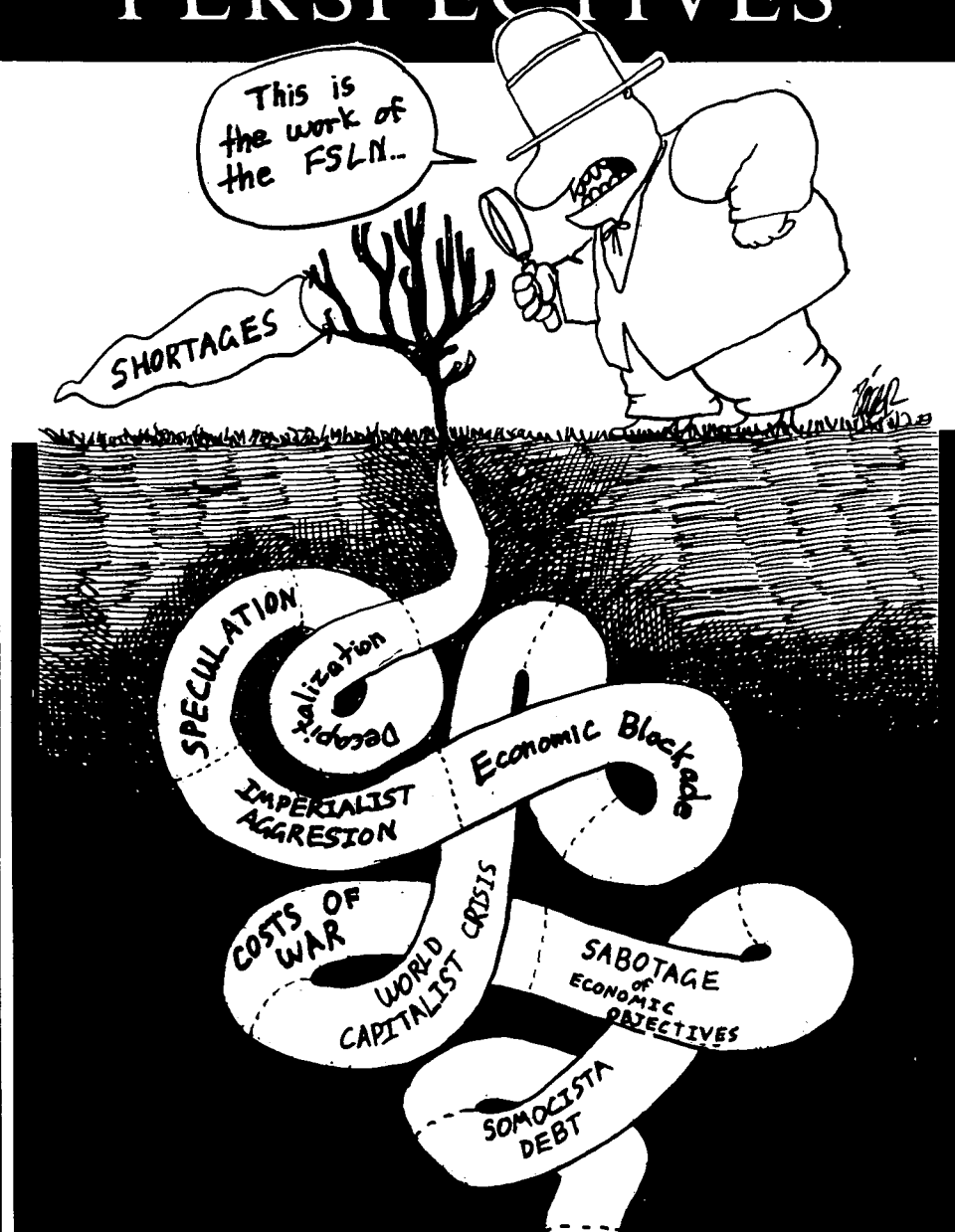
## SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





## PERSPECTIVES



# The disenchanted liberal stereotype

By Peter Marchetti

**I**N THE LIGHT OF THE REAGAN administration's current campaign to portray Nicaragua as a totalitarian Communist state, it is important for Americans to have an accurate view of that country and its revolution. The easy acceptance of the idea of a revolution betrayed, both in liberal circles and among disenchanted liberals in Congress, makes an examination of the way disenchanted liberal ideologues propagate distorted views of Third World revolutions in general, and Nicaragua in particular, a necessity.

A case in point is Robert S. Leiken's *New Republic* essay, "Nicaragua's Untold Stories" (Feb. 8, 1984). Like other disenchanted liberals, Leiken loves the revolution but detests the revolutionaries who made it. He thus begins his article with an intense image of betrayal. Sandinista leader Tomás Borge refuses even to talk to the mother of his old comrade Germán Pomares. The old woman "has yet to succeed in getting a doctor's appointment...sleeps on a cot covered with rags, hobbles through bare, unfurnished rooms...[and] lives on a pension equivalent to \$10 a month."

Friends of mine in El Viejo, the town where Señora Pomares lives, were outraged with Leiken's account. Instead of the gloom of Leiken's bare unfurnished rooms, Señora Pomares lives with her son, her daughter-in-law and 11 grandchildren in a home that is well-appointed by Nicaraguan standards. Instead of betraying his old comrade, Tomás Borge has adopted Germán Pomares' son and Señora Pomares frequently visits her grandchild at Borge's home. When Señora Pomares fractured her collarbone, she received immediate attention in León and daily rehabilitation treatments in Chinandega. Another member of the family had a problem getting an appointment with a particular neurologist-psychiatrist. Señora

Pomares' pension is the same as all the mothers of dead Sandinistas—1,500 *cor-dobas* a month. Leiken's use of black-market rates to calculate the dollar value makes the pension sound like a starvation wage. In reality, it is the minimum salary that all rural workers receive.

How could Leiken distort all this so thoroughly? The logic at work here is the sense of betrayal in the eye of the beholder. The cot covered with rags was enough to touch off Leiken's own sense of having been betrayed by the Sandinistas and enough to confirm for him that the report about Borge and Señora Pomares was true. The ideological key here is identification with Germán Pomares, who heroically gave his life for a revolution that now supposedly is untrue to his ideals.

The personal drama of betrayal and ethical option seems to eliminate the need for facts or for examining any given Third World revolution in its own historical context. This is what happened with U.S. media coverage of Nicaragua's elections. A high percentage of articles concentrated on Arturo Cruz, the hero who after being a member of the ruling junta refused to run in the elections. The American public received almost no information about opposition parties that took part in the electoral process, nor about the figure the Sandinistas feared most, Virgilio Godoy, whose Independent Liberal Party (PLI) claimed credit for the assassination of the first Somoza. *New York Times* correspondent Stephen Kinzer, who according to Leiken is "one of the few resident reporters to sniff out the *engaño* subterfuge of Sandinista policies," only began to report on Godoy and his party when the ex-minister of labor had pulled out of the elections. But Kinzer did not report anything about the conflict in the PLI over the decision not to run, nor that the vice-presidential candidate and other important leaders left the party and did run. The story was that Godoy and the PLI had joined Cruz and were not going to

be part of the "sham elections."

In any Third World country where social change takes place, the privileged tend to lose out because there isn't enough wealth to benefit the poor without taking something from those with property. The disenchanted liberal identifies immediately with those who lose out. Economic indicators such as the shortage of luxury consumer goods and the dissatisfaction of some entrepreneurs were enough to convince Leiken that the Sandinistas' "failure to preserve the revolutionary alliance with the middle class and small producers as well as sectarian political and cultural policies [has] polarized the country, led to disinvestment, falling productivity and wages, labor discontent and an agrarian crisis."

But as a United Nations advisor to the Nicaraguan government who has worked in Nicaragua for five years, one of my most frequent criticisms of Sandinista economic policy has been *over investment*, not disinvestment. Undoubtedly some of Leiken's contacts have stopped investing, but dinner table case studies hardly substitute for a look at data. In 1981, the economy showed an extremely high investment rate of 23 percent of its Gross National Product (GNP). The truth is that a Sandinista Nicaragua is investing more than Somoza Nicaragua ever did. The investment rate under Somoza during 1972-78 was 17.8 percent; under Sandinista administration (1980-84) the rate was 19.3 percent, according to Ministry of Planning figures.

The Nicaraguan government has changed its investment priorities from the city to the countryside. While capital investment in agriculture dropped by 57 percent in Guatemala and by 73 percent in Costa Rica between 1978 and 1982, capital investment in Nicaraguan agriculture grew by 149 percent between 1978 and 1980, by 34 percent in 1981, and by 126 percent in 1982. (Figures are from the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America [ECLA] and the International Development Bank [IDB].)

In carrying out this type of investment the Sandinistas are swimming against the stream. The rest of the Latin American countries actually are divesting—a normal response to international recession, which, according to ECLA, has caused a 3.3 percent drop in the continent's GNP in 1983 (Nicaragua's growth in 1983 was 5.1 percent). The Sandinistas may, in fact, be pushing too much investment in a period when the costs are high.

Leiken also tells us productivity is falling, but a study I recently completed indicated that although productivity for the industrial sector dropped by 8 percent between 1980 and 1981, the Sandinista rationalization and austerity plan in 1982 resulted in a 13 percent increase in productivity.

Despite Leiken's claim that Nicaragua is suffering an agrarian crisis, the real untold story about Nicaragua is the successful agrarian reform. Leiken takes birth pangs of a new land tenure system for a crisis. More than 51,000 of the 110,000 farmers who lacked secure tenure and access to sufficient land now have received titles from the government. In contrast to other land reforms in Latin America, in which production fell by 20-50 percent, the Sandinista reform has been accompanied by constantly expanding agricultural growth.

Crop production grew by 38.6 percent between 1981 and 1983 for a 12.5 percent average growth. Such performance would not have been possible without an extremely prudent land reform law that guarantees private ownership to any and all direct producers. The land reform has managed to maintain the confidence of small and medium producers as well as that of many big growers. That alliance is what gave Nicaragua an overall GNP growth in 1983 of 5.1 percent. In order to maintain that alliance with the private sector real wages have declined, but not by 71 percent as Leiken claimed. Published data from Nicaragua's Ministry of Planning showed a much less severe decline of 22.3 percent in real wages between 1979 and 1981.

One of the extraordinary things about

Leiken's article is the power of his impressions and the lack of hard information. Leiken refused or cancelled appointments with several people who could have given him more facts. He could have met with the minister of labor, but turned down that opportunity. He was uninterested in meeting with the regional governors who control day-to-day decisions in Nicaragua or with political candidates other than those of the *Coordinadora*, who refused to enter the election. He was equally uninterested in seeing the health program in Esteli or any rural cooperatives. When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not get him an appointment with any of the commanders, he cancelled his interviews with lesser officials. The ministry responded in kind by cancelling his interview with Sergio Ramirez, the vice-presidential candidate of the FSLN.

So biased were Leiken's sources that he concluded the Nicaraguan literacy campaign, was a total failure. Of the 400,000 people who became literate during Nicaragua's internationally acclaimed literacy campaign, Leiken could find no one who could still read. This is strange, because even though Leiken was not interested in visiting any of the country's 13,000 Popular Education Centers he should have been able to find at least one of the 161,371 people still receiving follow-up in an adult education program run by 12,211 volunteer teachers. Similarly, his judgment that the *contra* war has had little impact on the economy is suspect. Defense, which took 7 percent of the national budget in 1980, now drains 45 percent of the budget. Leiken ends up exonerating the U.S.-backed military strategy designed to disrupt the Nicaraguan economy because the "mess [was] created by the Sandinistas themselves."

Leiken's treatment of the "Eastern-style queueing" is hardly more felicitous. He writes: "As shoppers make the rounds looking for rice, beans, milk, toilet paper, soap or light bulbs, the shopkeepers' constant reply is 'No hay' (there isn't any)." But his stereotype just doesn't fit Nicaragua. Because of the high subsidies to the consumer, the rising agricultural output and the steep increases in food imports, Nicaraguans ate more per capita during the first four years of the revolution (1980-83) than during the last normal years of the Somoza regime (1976-78).

The poor not only eat more staples but are now able to buy toilet paper and use more soap. The fact that imported non-essential goods like light bulbs are hard to find doesn't mean that the market, which in Leiken's words was "once the bustling center of Nicaraguan life," is now Soviet dull as it comes off in Leiken's saleable stereotype. The Nicaraguan government built four new markets (bazaars where small merchants gather to sell their wares) in hopes of making it more convenient for people to get to market. But the Mercado Oriental continued to grow even though the new markets were thriving. The government thus discovered that one of its biggest problems is the ever-expanding number of small merchants and peddlers in Managua. Leiken's key example is even less felicitous than his overall portrayal of market conditions. He depicts a Coca-Cola deliveryman involved in corruption in order to be able to afford "three bottles of milk his children need. The milk cost him 150 *cor-dobas*, 30 percent of his weekly wages." First, there are no milk bottles in Nicaragua. Second, milk is highly subsidized. Even at black market prices, three liters of milk in plastic bags cost nine *cor-dobas*, 10 times cheaper than milk in San José, Costa Rica.

Leiken skips from corruption to the next important theme of disenchanted liberalism: the golden rule of how the attempt to create a more just society leads to the hypocritical repetition of old evils. In his extreme formulation, "high ranking Sandinistas are turning big profits from the scarcity.... The transformation of Somocistas into Sandinistas and of Sandinistas into oppositionists is very common. In every town we visited we were told that former

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Somoza officials are now running CDSs [Sandinista Block Committees]."

The evidence Leiken adduces for this is that a leather goods cooperative has sold some of the leather it was allotted instead of producing goods with all of it, and that CDS block leaders have been known to sell goods on the black market. All this proves is that Nicaragua's thousands of new cooperatives are free to profit as they want in the market and that a significant number of block leaders are not saints but real live human beings living in what Leiken calls "degenerate bourgeois society." Here is disenchantment liberalism at its best. If the revolution is not perfect, if market phenomena and humanity clash with somewhat successful attempts to lessen the crush of poverty on the poor, then that revolution is more degenerate than the old order it seeks to replace because it is hypocritically "addicted to the very vices that it routinely denounces in 'degenerate bourgeois society.'"

Leiken also charges the Sandinistas with widespread corruption, increasing privilege, and even sexual harassment. In a passage typical of his ideology he twists the facts ever so deftly to create an effect. Leiken writes: "Party members shop at hard-currency stores, dine at luxury restaurants restricted to party officials and vacation in the mansions of the Somoza dynasty, labeled 'protocol houses.' Vans pull up daily at government and party offices to deliver ham, lobster and other delicacies unavailable elsewhere. In a private state dining room, I ate a sumptuous meal with a comandante at a long table, attended by five servants."

There is only one hard currency store, not as many as Leiken indicates. That store was set up to serve international functionaries and recently also friends of those functionaries. They're not exclusively for Sandinistas, as Leiken would have us believe. The private state dining room was a dining room for public officials and visitors of the national legislature, the Council of State. In this passage, Leiken seems to demand that the revolutionary state behave like St. Francis of Assisi. If it doesn't reach that level of austerity, it is judged profoundly corrupt. For the disenchanting liberal there is nothing in the middle: either idealistic support for the revolution or righteous denunciation of yet another betrayed revolution.

*Peter Marchetti is a 39-year-old Jesuit from Nebraska. He received his doctorate from Yale and has taught at Marquette University.*

## PERSPECTIVES

# It's church vs. church and state in Nicaragua

By Stephen F. Diamond

**I**N HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE NICARAGUAN revolution after the Sandinistas took power in July 1979, FSLN Comandante Humberto Ortega discussed the independent initiative of the Nicaraguan people: "The truth is we always saw the masses as a prop for the guerrilla campaign that would deal some blows to the National Guard. Reality was quite different: guerrilla activity served as a prop for the masses, who crushed the enemy by means of insurrection."

A key factor in this insurrection was the grassroots church that flourished in Nicaragua in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the 1968 meeting of Latin American bishops in Medellin, Colombia. Spurred by a new pastoral focus for the church, hundreds of Nicaraguan priests, nuns and lay religious exercised a "preferential option for the poor." They moved into poor urban barrios and rural villages in order to establish Christian Base Communities and to train lay activists to take on many of the roles once reserved for priests.

Under a growing political and economic crisis, intensified by the devastating earthquake in Managua in 1972, these base communities conducted relief activities and political actions. Fasts, vigils, church occupations and public demonstrations, often with the open support of the church hierarchy, under the leadership of Archbishop Obando y Bravo, were organized. Soon the pressure of events led to direct armed confrontation with the National Guard. Defense committees, not always in contact with the still tiny FSLN, were formed in the barrios and villages. The leaders of these armed groups were often the same people who had been trained in the base communities. A national insurrection began in September 1978, and the overthrow of Somoza 10 months later became inevitable.

Post-revolutionary relations between the Catholic Church and the new Sandinista state began with optimism. Both the Base Communities and the church hierarchy supported the FSLN. But relations soon worsened. The hierarchy withdrew its initial endorsement and now openly supports a dialog with the CIA-backed and Somocista-led *contra* forces. The shift is consistent with the hierarchy's ties to the business and middle-class opposition. As these anti-Somoza leaders such as Alfonso Robelo and Arturo Cruz moved to oppose the FSLN, so did the hierarchy. With firm backing from the Pope and the Reagan administration, the Nicaraguan bishops have gained enough confidence to challenge directly the four leading Sandinista priests. Ernesto Cardenal, a Trappist, serves as minister of culture; his brother, Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit, is minister of education; Miguel d'Escoto, a Maryknoll priest, is foreign minister; Father Edgar Parrales is Nicaragua's representative to the Organization of American States.

In late January Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega, president of the Nicaraguan Bishops Conference, said these four would be stripped of their priesthood if they do not leave government office. Fernando Cardenal has already been expelled from his Jesuit order. Father Parrales has announced his intention to leave the priesthood rather than abandon his post in the government. This move by the hierarchy will be viewed as a setback in recent attempts to reestablish a dialog between the Sandinistas and the bishops. Only a few weeks prior to this announcement, the hopes of Christian Nicaraguans were raised when Bishop Vega delivered the invocation at newly-elected President Daniel Ortega's inauguration.

The bishops' complaints stem from incidents during the last several years: the Sandinistas have expelled numerous priests from the country for alleged counter-revolutionary activities, including advocating resistance to the military draft; the FSLN prevented publication for several months of a pastoral letter to Nicaraguans from the Pope; and the Pope himself was loudly heckled by a Managua crowd while conducting mass during his visit to the country in 1983.

The hierarchy has also made moves similar to the government's. In addition to pressure on the four Sandinista priests, several other priests and nuns have been transferred out of politically active parishes. The Association of Nicaraguan Clergy, which was formally recognized by the government and sent a representative to serve on the Council of State, was disbanded. And in a stunning pastoral letter issued last Easter, the Bishops' Conference openly called for recognition of the *contras*:

*The road to social peace is through dialog, sincere dialog that seeks truth and goodness.... All Nicaraguans inside and outside the country must participate in this dialog, regardless of ideology, class or*

*partisan belief. Furthermore, we think that Nicaraguans who have taken up arms against the government must also participate in this dialog. If not, there will be no possibility of a settlement....*

Though attention in the U.S. has been focused on polarization between the hierarchy and the Sandinistas, the popular church flourishes independent of both the established church and the FSLN. The Base Communities are now organized into a national network. They and other lay religious leaders express themselves through meetings, forums, classes and various publications. Two major centers, the Centro Antonio Valdivieso and the Instituto Historico Centroamericano, provide alternative perspectives on social, political and economic events. Pat Hynds, a lay Maryknoll missionary based in Managua, helped found the Instituto Historico's *Envio* magazine. "Our approach is one of critical support, supportive of the revolution's goals but not blindly so," she says. "We have pointed out problems, mistakes and things we didn't agree with, in particular the area of the Atlantic Coast [where the Miskito population is based]. Also in some of the ways the government was handling the church; for example, the expulsion of 10 priests [by the FSLN] did not do church-state relations any good. They used the same logic as Pinochet."

*Envio* calls attention to contributions made by other Christians. In one issue it discussed a statement issued by an ad hoc group called Christian Fidelity in the Nicaraguan Process. *Envio* summarized the document and its significance:

*In the context of overall support for the process, the Christians questioned the lack of austerity on the part of some leaders, the danger of depersonalizing and "massifying" the people, growing bureaucratization, etc. The document reflected the characteristic shared by other writings and materials that began to emerge in 1981 and that continue to be published today: critical support for the process.*

The document stirred up major interest in Nicaragua. The FSLN agreed to a public discussion of the issues raised and a forum was held at the University of Central America in Managua.

*Envio* has raised other sensitive issues for discussion. In one issue they noted the abuse of the term "*contra*" by aggressive supporters of the FSLN:

*Who comprises the counterrevolution? What is the difference between legitimate healthy criticism and counterrevolution? Is everyone who leaves the country a counter-revolutionary? There is little argument that groups that have taken up arms for the express purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua can be called "contra." ...Problems begin to arise when those less politically responsible from lower echelons of government begin to loosely apply the label to anyone who disagrees with them. As attacks in the country increase there is a danger that this tendency could increase. In a situation of virtual war, there will be less space for dissent and criticism, especially if national security is at stake.*

Pat Hynds told of discussion in another Christian publication, *Tayacan*, a weekly newspaper aimed at the newly literate, dealing with the problem of shortages of goods. They did "not rely on simplistic answers," she said. "They did not say that it was simply the fault of the U.S. nor simply the fact that some government leaders are just hoarding goods." Despite such frank discussions, Hynds points out that the Instituto Historico experiences "no censorship."

### Sandinistas' views.

The FSLN remains internally divided on the role of the church in Nicaragua. The National Directorate's "Official Communication on Religion" issued in 1980 recognizes that "the patriots and Christian revolutionaries are an integral part of the Sandinista Revolution not only as of now, but for a number of years.... The liberty to profess a religious faith is to the FSLN an inalienable right of the people that a re-

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**Despite the war,  
a vigorous dialog  
is in progress in  
the church and with  
the state.**



volutionary government fully guarantees." But behind the statement lies a full range of opinions on religion.

Father Cesar Jerez, a Jesuit and director of research and post-graduate studies at Managua's University of Central America, describes a "spectrum of tendencies with regard to religion and church inside the Sandinista Front." Two extreme views make up a minority within the party. One "doctrinaire" group "firmly adhere[s] to the dogmatic Marxist-Leninist interpretation of religion, both theoretically and practically. These people believe precisely what the Sandinista Front denies, namely that religion is always delusory and reactionary." The other extreme tendency, which in some ways mirrors the first, are those Sandinistas "who keep alive a fervent faith" and see "no contradiction between being Christian...and being Sandinista revolutionaries. It is precisely this group whom other members of the church accuse violently of being a fifth column of Marxism within the church." Sandinista priests like the Cardinal brothers belong to this tendency.

Three middle groups make up the majority of the FSLN, Fr. Jerez believes. One type "adhere[s] in principle to the orthodox Marxist theses. They believe, however, that it is pointless to struggle against religion, and hence against the churches. They think that the development of revolutionary processes with their tendencies toward secularization will slowly reduce the impact of religion on people's minds." A second type "have had a religious tradition in their families.... However, either because they have become disillusioned with the institutional church or simply because they think that the work of the revolution has the capacity to absorb them, heart and mind, they have, so to speak, put religion and church attendance aside, at least for a while." The third type, Fr. Jerez suggests, are people "who keep on being religious and have never ceased to accept the Catholic faith. They are, however, confused, sometimes even estranged from sacramental practice. ...They cannot understand the reticence, much less the attacks, that characterize the attitudes to that revolutionary process of many clergy in the Catholic Church."

Despite the *contra* war against Nicaragua, a vigorous dialog among the church continues unabated. But increased U.S. pressure could give those who support a bureaucratic solution to Nicaragua's future the upper hand. During a five-month stay in Nicaragua last spring, American theologian Richard Shaull, emeritus professor of Ecumenics at Princeton University, raised this possibility with lay religious leaders in rural Nicaragua. He found that they "have a sense of their own community with autonomy *vis a vis* the revolution. Because of their critical participation in the revolution. It is this milieu that produces a sort of independent and critical sense that they never had before. They are not just fitting into some sort of a political system or just mouthing its language." When he asked about the impact war or economic crisis could have on dissent, they replied that there may be "more regimentation, which may create conflict with the more independent attitudes of the poor, but that the process had reached a point where it could hardly be reversed. It would act as a check against that tendency of bureaucratization."

Whether dialog or bureaucracy and violence will provide a solution for Nicaragua remains uncertain. But a key need is the end of the Reagan administration's illegal war against that nation. As Father Jerez asked of an American religious audience during a visit here: "I implore you in the name of God, in the name of the Nicaraguan people and church, do everything in your power to end the constant harassment of Nicaragua, to ensure that peace has a chance before destruction becomes irreversible, as in Vietnam. I ask all people of goodwill to facilitate the necessary dialog, and to throw no more fuel on the fires of hatred and distortion."

**Stephen F. Diamond** teaches at the University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education.

## "Our brothers" in action

By Connie Blitt  
and Dennis Bernstein

**L**AST SPRING THE CHILDREN of the Kahn Day Care Center in Oakland, Calif., sent a banner to their sister center in La Sorpresa, Nicaragua. It read "*Queremos Paz*"—Peace, We Want Peace. An American journalist videotaped the Nicaraguan children receiving the banner and in turn singing a peace song for their friends in California. This cross-cultural exchange became much more than a geography lesson when the children of the Kahn Center began to feel the tremors of the brutal war waging on some 3,000 miles to the south of them in Nicaragua.

On November 14 the state coffee farm of La Sorpresa was attacked by 300 *contras*, members of the "Nicaraguan Democratic Force" (FDN). They burned to the ground a coffee processing plant, a food warehouse and almost all the homes. The day care center that had been in communication with the children in Oakland was reduced to rubble and ash.

Fatalities in the raid included a four-year-old boy and a 16-month-old infant whose crib was pierced by machine-gun fire from the *contras*. Four teachers at the day care center and eight farm workers in the fields were also killed, five others kidnapped.

Such attacks by the Reagan-backed *contras* are on the increase. "They are trying to terrorize the population," explained Betsy Cohn of the Central American Historical Institute, "to frighten them into cooperation."

"On the Atlantic coast they have killed teachers, fishermen and health workers," reported scholar Ray Hooker, Nicaraguan National Assembly Representative from the Zelaya region, home of many English-speaking blacks and Miskito Indians. "Many of our hospitals, especially in the remote areas, are being systematically destroyed, many of our schools cannot function." During a recent speaking tour in the U.S., Hooker cited one example of a teacher who was killed in the most brutal manner. "He was skinned alive, scalped and his genitals were cut off."

On Sept. 5, 1984, Representative Hooker was himself wounded and kidnapped by the counterrevolutionaries. "I was bleeding for 14 hours. They said it was the will of God whether I lived or I died, but they made no movement to provide medical attention for me."

Maryknoll Sister Nancy Donovan was kidnapped by the *contras* on January 8, when the pick-up truck she was riding in was ambushed near the Honduran border. She was held several hours and released unharmed, but 18-year-old Freddy Castellon who had been traveling with her was savagely tortured and killed. The Mexican doctor who examined him found that his fingers, toes and legs had been broken, and his face had been pulverized by a rock or the butt of a gun.

In her press conference about the incident, Sister Donovan recalled that the *contras* who held her were "well armed and equipped. One of the men wore an arm patch that said 'Soldier of Fortune, Second Convention.' Another had 'U.S. Army' written on the front of his uniform.... They told me that their supplies are dropped by planes that 'fly quietly at night.'"

The anti-Sandinista war has already cost U.S. taxpayers \$150 million and is responsible for \$250 million worth of damage in Nicaragua. More than a thousand civilians, including 150 children under the age of 12, are listed among the dead, and 130,000 people have been displaced from their homes.

### New names for an old game.

After Anastasio Somoza was overthrown in 1979, more than 4,000 of his National Guardsmen fled to Honduras. Many of

them became roving bandits, living as they always had, by terrorizing the local citizenry. The most famous and feared was Pedro Pablo Ortiz Centeno. He and his band of followers were arrested repeatedly in southern Honduras for theft and murder.

When the CIA began encouraging the organization of the *contras* in 1981, they joined ex-National Guardsmen such as Ortiz, also known as Commander Suicide, with Somoza's vice-president, Alfonso Callejas, Deshon, and others.

Callejas now co-directs the FDN, by far the largest *contra* group, from his home in Miami. The current FDN military commander-in-chief, Enrique Bermudez Varela, is a former National Guard colonel with close ties in Washington since serving as Somoza's military attache to the U.S.

Ronald Reagan refers to these close associates of the former dictator as our "brothers" in struggle, and "freedom-fighters."

David MacMichael, a former Marine who spent 12 years preparing reports on counterinsurgency for Stanford Research Institute and the Department of Defense

*Reagan's friends  
in Nicaragua are  
mostly former  
Somoza thugs  
who are killing  
civilians and  
avoiding combat.*

before moving to a position with the CIA, is highly skeptical of the president's praise for the *contras*. As a high level CIA analyst specializing in Central America, MacMichael found huge gaps between intelligence reports and policy statements made by the administration. While Reagan was painting a picture of a large-scale arms flow from the Soviet Union and Cuba through Nicaragua to the rebels of El Salvador, MacMichael, who was analyzing the government's intelligence data, found no evidence of such weapons transfer. He left the CIA and has gone public with his criticisms in the hope of preventing a full-scale war in Central America.

We are at a crucial moment in inter-American history. The Reagan administration is rapidly closing the door on all possibilities of a negotiated settlement with the Sandinistas. The U.S. has walked out of the talks in Mexico and undermined the Contadora process. It has turned its back on the World Court which offered the president a perfect opportunity to have his case heard, and the righteousness of his claims against the Sandinistas vindicated in the eyes of the entire world.

In the past the Congress has taken some principled steps by censuring the CIA's mining of Nicaraguan harbors and by temporarily withholding funds for the *contras*. With the administration now pressuring Congress to release some \$14 million in prior allocations, Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-IN), chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, is planning hearings on covert aid and alleged *contra* atrocities. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) is contemplating similar action in the Senate. The hearings are an excellent idea and should be pursued posthaste as a possible deterrent to an escalating Central American war policy that could turn the entire region into a bloody battlefield with no winners.

Connie Blitt and Dennis Bernstein have written for *Newsday*, *Commonweal* and *The Progressive*.

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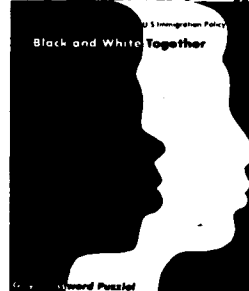
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Solzhenitsyn

By Michael Scammell  
Norton, 1051 pp., \$29.95

By James North

SOME YEARS AGO, I MET a young Russian woman who was working for her government in a certain African country. It was the first time either of us had met someone from the other side more than briefly, and we spent several days in almost continual conversation. Anna had a skeptical, even cynical view of her national leaders, much like Americans who disparage "the politicians," but she was loyal to the Soviet system itself.

Early on, I mentioned my admiration for Alexander Solzhenitsyn and asked how his novels read in the original Russian. She answered somewhat sheepishly that she had only gotten hold of them outside the USSR. She went on with increasing firmness: "His portrayal of various types of people in Soviet society is brilliant. His use of our language is new and masterful. In fact, his books should not be available to foreigners because they will not be able to fully understand and appreciate them. And he should never have left our country."

After finishing Michael Scammell's superb new biography, *Solzhenitsyn*, I can better understand that Anna's confused attitudes represent a large segment of Soviet society. Of course, I reminded her that Solzhenitsyn did not choose to write mainly for foreigners or live in exile. But there is no question that neither he nor the other dissidents have been able to attract much attention inside the USSR, and there were no widespread complaints, even privately, when he was forced to leave 10 years ago.

The reality in the Soviet Union today is that large numbers of people, probably an actual majority, continue either to support the present system or to acquiesce in it enough to regard someone like Solzhenitsyn with great suspicion. We sometimes assume, erroneously, that the USSR must be like Eastern Europe, where the majority regularly makes its hostile view of the satellite governments known.

This Soviet loyalty seems strange. After all, some 10 to 15 million people were imprisoned in the Gulag Archipelago during the peak Stalin years, and millions never left it alive. There has been reform since, though the system that created the string of concentration camps is still intact. Yet the dissidents, even when they could function with some openness—from 1962, when Solzhenitsyn's prison camp novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, appeared legally inside the USSR, to the mid-'70s, when the crackdown worsened—were unable to win large numbers of conversions. Even the intelligentsia, their most logical allies, remained aloof; Scammell details how very few spoke up in protest when the faint-hearted Writers Union expelled Solzhenitsyn.

#### An extraordinary man.

The dissidents did not fail because they lacked courage or determination. *Solzhenitsyn* proves convincingly that its subject is an extraordinary man, who, denied paper in the camps, composed and memorized a 12,000-line poem and then, after his release, spent years writing books even though

he was certain they would never be published during his lifetime. Scammell also conveys Solzhenitsyn's great charm and warmth, traits that do not always come across partly because the writer insists on stern poses in his photographs.

Solzhenitsyn started off as a student and then an army officer, a dedicated Young Communist who wrote his wife from the World War II battlefield, "What can I do for Leninism? How can I arrange my life for that?" Even when he was sentenced in 1945 to eight years in the Gulag, mainly for writing personal letters that criticized "the Great Stalin," he still maintained his belief in the overall Soviet system. Biographer Scammell goes into meticulous detail in these and other areas (the book is 1,051 pages). This sometimes numbing detail is generally necessary to counter the Soviet propaganda campaign, which includes false charges that he was an embittered bourgeois youth who always hated Communism, and that he was a coward who had actually surrendered to the Nazis.

As a writer, Solzhenitsyn has often worked closely from reality. Scammell's biography describes the background and character models for his great novels *One Day*, *Cancer Ward* and *The First*

*Circle*. Particularly moving is the real story of two of his closest friends among the *zeks*, or prisoners—Lev Kopelev and Dimitri Panin (Lev Rubin and Dimitri Sologdin in *The First Circle*). Kopelev, a tall, bearded Jew, was an expert on German language and literature, a decorated army officer who was in the Gulag because he had tried to restrain Red Army atrocities during the invasion of East Prussia. He was a good-humored, passionate Communist, convinced there was a mistake in his case that his steady stream of petitions would soon rectify.

Dimitri Panin was a Christian who had bitterly opposed the Soviet system since childhood. He had been in the Gulag since 1940, and he never expected to get out. He would seem the very antithesis of Kopelev. Yet the two were close friends who helped each other through the rigors of the vast labor camp system. They argued enthusiastically for the allegiance of the younger Solzhenitsyn (Gleb Nerzhin), who was by now somewhere in the middle but moving in Panin's direction. During these last fearful years of Stalin's reign the three friends could have gotten 25-year sentences on the outside for their spirited conversations. Solzhenitsyn, Scammell concludes, "was beginning to realize

that he had fallen into a magic circle that was the freest in the whole of the Soviet Union."

#### After Stalin.

After Stalin died, many of the prisoners were released but sentenced to exile in remote areas. Solzhenitsyn taught physics at a high school; he was by all accounts conscientious, inspiring and popular. But his main passion was his writing, and he applied his supreme self-discipline to use every spare moment for it. One of his aims was to clean his work of the stilted, sloganeering "newspeak" that characterized the Stalinist period. Scammell, himself one of Solzhenitsyn's translators, explains masterfully how the young writer literally invented new Russian words to convey his meanings.

Nikita Khrushchev personally approved the publication of *One Day* as part of his campaign against party hardliners. The careerists in the intelligentsia genuflected on command, hailing Solzhenitsyn as another Tolstoy and nearly awarding him a Lenin Prize. But Khrushchev fell, partly due to the Cuban missile crisis, and the winds changed direction. A totalitarian society has many weapons. It can blacklist dissidents from working, deny them residence permits in certain cities, or even prosecute them for "parasitism" or other "crimes."

No more of Solzhenitsyn's work could be published in his own country. He reluctantly smuggled his manuscripts abroad, while devoting more of his precious time to defending himself against the regime's slanders. The growing pressure must have helped encourage what Scammell calls his "vengeful, Old Testament side." He came to believe that God had chosen him as "a sword," which has unfortunately become the sole image many Westerners have of him.

But what must have also galled Solzhenitsyn was how little effect

his broadsides were having inside his country. He believed that if *The Gulag Archipelago* circulated widely "then in a very short space of time no Communist ideology would be left." The regime naturally banned the book, although sympathizers did disseminate it secretly. Even so, it seems clear that few Soviets were willing to support the dissidents in a frontal challenge to the regime.

Fear of the powerful, vindictive dictatorship of course explains much of this hesitation. There are, after all, one to two million people still in labor camps (although far fewer are apparently "political" prisoners). But fear alone is not a sufficient explanation; other police states in Eastern Europe, Chile and South Africa do not lack strong, if circumspect, oppositions.

Some have argued that Russian nationalism, strengthened by the memories of the suffering in the Great Patriotic War, explain the often grudging but undeniable loyalty to the Soviet state. Many Soviets, like my friend Anna, genuinely regard the dissidents as almost traitors who collaborate with the West. Another explanation, put forward by the late scholar Isaac Deutscher, points to the social mobility in the USSR; the system is hierarchical and authoritarian, but there is at least some chance that children from the lower orders can rise within it—provided they work hard and conform.

Whatever the reasons, the Soviet system seems stable. The invasion of Afghanistan, for instance, seems to have provoked almost no dissent at all. The USSR is willing and able to match any Western military build-up with the continued support of most of its population.

Detente seems to be the only alternative. It is essential to reduce the dangers of nuclear catastrophe. But the word has been discredited by the cynical Nixon-Kissinger policy, which viewed the dissidents as irritating obstacles to superpower deals. In Gerald Ford's case, this *realpolitik* extended to refusing even to meet the exiled Solzhenitsyn.

Many Americans, of course, rejected Kissinger's negative policy of dividing the world with Moscow while ignoring its oppression at home. Instead, we need a new version of detente, a democratic detente, a positive policy that straightforwardly calls for peaceful change in the Soviet dictatorship and appeals for American grassroots support on that basis. Such a policy will not be easy. We must recognize that the USSR is an entrenched dictatorship, and we cannot insist on reforms as a precondition to arms talks, trade, the transfer of high technology and so on. At the same time, democratic detente must insist that human rights questions be linked to negotiations. We must point out that detente is the best way to promote human rights in the Soviet Union. As world tensions start to decline, people inside the USSR should feel less defensive and nationalistic, and larger numbers should start to demand a thaw in their system.

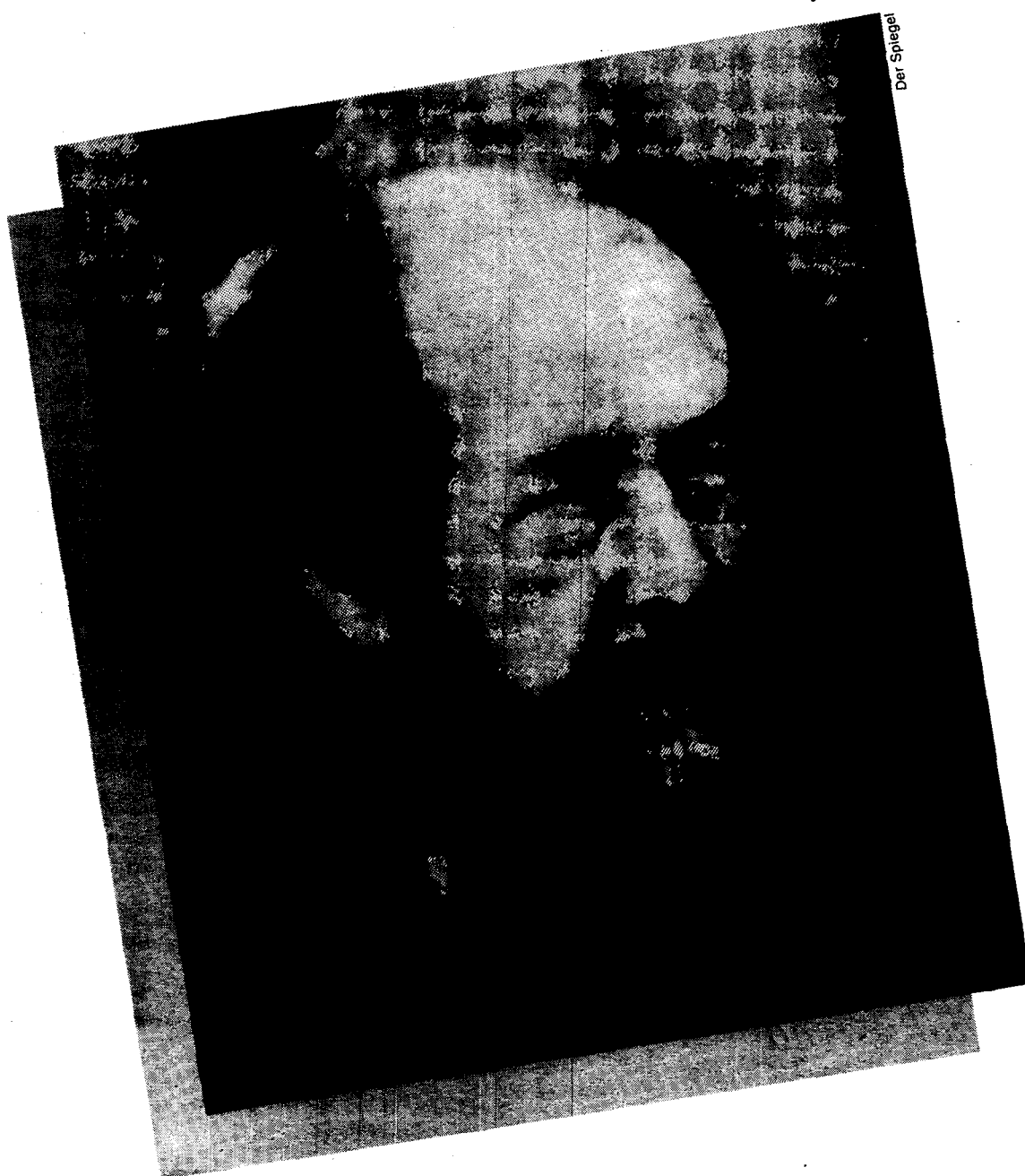
The obvious danger is that Western criticism can be twisted by the regime's propaganda apparatus into sounding like malevolent threats, which will not reduce defensiveness among the Russian people. That is why democratic

*Alexander Solzhenitsyn's books are unavailable in his country.*

INPRINT

BIOGRAPHY

## Understanding Solzhenitsyn





## SPORTS

# Playing ball in the land of the free



The Crawford's team, 1932, with Satchel Paige in the rear, second from the left. Rogosin tells the story of the development of the black leagues.

## Invisible Men

By Donn Rogosin  
Atheneum, 283 pp., \$14.95

By Lester Rodney

ONE OF THE LESSER known chapters in American sports history is the story of black baseball before the walls of segregation were pushed down in 1947.

The integration of the major and minor leagues that followed the Jackie Robinson breakthrough inevitably spelled *finis* for the fabled Negro Leagues. They were something. Barred by the white baseball establishment, ignored by the white press and playing in often primitive conditions, the black ballplayers created a life throbbing with the special elan that the oppressed often develop. If you want to understand the apparent paradox of fond looking back to lousier times, you would have to hear (as sportswriters with the old Brooklyn Dodgers did) black catcher Roy Campanella spin stories about catching four games in one day. That's two doubleheaders in different towns, separated by a grueling bus trip, with no showers, and sandwiches snatched on the run from the back door of "whites only" road cafes.

On special occasions, the black teams were able to rent idle big league ballparks to showcase for black fans and a smattering of whites such marvelous players as

*Black teams were barred from white baseball.*

détente should be conducted as much as possible independently of Western governments. Reagan administration denunciations of the USSR are hollow and hypocritical; the same condemnations issued by Amnesty International have a great deal more weight.

I suspect people inside the USSR may be less rigid than we imagine. My friend Anna explained to me how she came to join the Komsomol, or Young Communist league: "I hesitated for a long time because I disliked them for being authoritarian, careerist and often insincere. Then, when I was 19, President Allende was overthrown in Chile in the coup supported by the CIA. Our country had supported Allende, and other similar movements in the Third World. Despite the bad points of our system, I could see we were often on the right side. Despite my misgivings, I went to join the Komsomol the next day."

Americans also deeply affected by the Chilean coup may have a shock of recognition at Anna's decision. She was not one-sided either; she refused to defend the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Democratic détente is the sort of policy that could appeal to people like her, who are not stalwarts in the Soviet system but who stiffen if they sense it is threatened.

This is not an approach that Alexander Solzhenitsyn would support. Biographer Scammell explains that Solzhenitsyn's more reactionary statements during his years in exile have been to some degree exaggerated in the press, but there is no doubt he thinks the West should become harsher with the Soviets. By many accounts, he has become more irascible in his personal life as well. He has become sadly estranged from his old friend Panin and distant with Kopelev, both of whom also went into exile.

This new quarrelsomeness and rigidity may help explain why his most recent novel, *August 1914*, did not get the same adulation as his earlier work. Some of the strength in his first books was that he was faithful to the different kinds of people he portrayed, and his characters came to life. By contrast, the protagonists in *August 1914* seem more like mouthpieces, there only to present Solzhenitsyn's own strong views. It is more than a little dangerous to reproach a man for not continuing to write masterpieces. But there is no avoiding the feeling that the Soviet regime, by harassing him and exiling him into becoming more polemical, may have salvaged something for itself.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is usually claimed by the right for obvious reasons—his terrible experiences under "socialism" and his forceful views in more recent years. But there is another way to look at his extraordinary life. One vital element of any genuine socialism should be a profound respect for people and their capacity to do good, even when they are suffering and under great pressure. It is by contrast the right that has a gloomy, miserly view of human nature, that promotes selfishness as an organizing principle for society. In Solzhenitsyn's stated views, which deserve to be taken seriously, he is now clearly some kind of conservative. But his own life, filled with courage and sacrifice, tends to undermine him. ■

James North is the author of *Freedom Rising* and a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.

Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige, Cool Papa Bell, Ray Dandridge, Willie Wells, Buck Leonard, Oscar Charleston (called by old timers the best player of all time) and far too many others to list.

The full story of the development, structure and problems of the black leagues, though dodo stuff to most of today's fans, has long deserved telling. By a lucky happenstance, Donn Rogosin, a University of California at Santa Cruz grad who taught at the University of Texas, met and became friends with Willie Wells in Austin, Texas, where both live. Wells, a premier shortstop in the '20s and '30s, not only regaled Rogosin with invaluable recollections, but over a five-year period helped him contact other surviving players and principles of the Negro Leagues.

*Invisible Men* is sometimes choked with too much detail for sustained readability, which seems to be a common sin among academics who write books. It is as if they can't bear to omit any of the materials they unearth. Nonetheless, this subject is basically so central to American life that if one has any interest in baseball and/or the long and never-completed fight of American blacks for full equality, this book is strongly recommended.

The historical development of the leagues is laced with meaningful incidents recalled by the players, some involving the clash between high-spirited blacks and Southern customs. One player from upstate New York, Dick Seay, sickened to hear teammates call 15-year-old Southerners "mister," said "so long" and settled in Puerto Rico.

Baseball's Latin connection is well dealt with. Rogosin offers a plausible hypothesis for its role in the desegregation campaign. White major and minor league

players who needed more money often went below the border in the off-season, and found themselves on teams with American blacks. Rogosin makes the point that it was probably in Latin America that some of the myths about white and black player relationships used by segregationists were first laid to rest. "How could a white pitcher take his orders from a black catcher?" they used to ask. Down there they just did. Often American whites and blacks in Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic found themselves at least superficially drawn together by common food preferences and common language.

Rogosin is on somewhat dubious ground in proposing that the Negro Leagues were consciously "founded with the aim, ultimately, of integrating the game." It's a nice thought, but smacks of retroactive consciousness. It seems more solid to say that the Negro Leagues were founded out of artistic and financial necessity in the face of absolute official "Jim Crow." Almost by default, as the author found, most of the black owners in position to invest in the teams were numbers operators. They are not especially noted for far-ranging idealism.

The black players themselves, of course, were always aware of the huge irony of being barred from the national pastime of "the land of the free." And by the very nature of things, the Negro Leagues did ultimately come to play a role in the historic breakthrough. The roster of early big league black stars who came out of the Negro Leagues—Robinson, Doby, Mays, Campanella, Newcombe, Irvin, Black and Howard—is testimony enough.

It is when Rogosin dips briefly into the events that ended big league discrimination that his

book falters. Fashionably anti-Communist, he writes with palpable distaste and less than historicity about the Communist role. His press research clearly stopped short of the *Daily Worker*—the first daily newspaper in the United States to open and sustain a drive against racial discrimination in baseball—since he doesn't even spell the name of the *Worker's* wartime sports editor correctly. He winds up with the roundhouse *pronunciamento*: "The black players and the black press were unimpressed by the Communist campaign."

Oh? Satchel Paige, in an interview with this *Daily Worker* writer published Sept. 16, 1937, said the black players knew about and cheered the *Worker* campaign, which put the white baseball officials, team owners, managers and many players on the spot and on the record for the first time in a daily newspaper. "I was out in Puerto Rico then, and heard about it," Paige said. "That was really starting something."

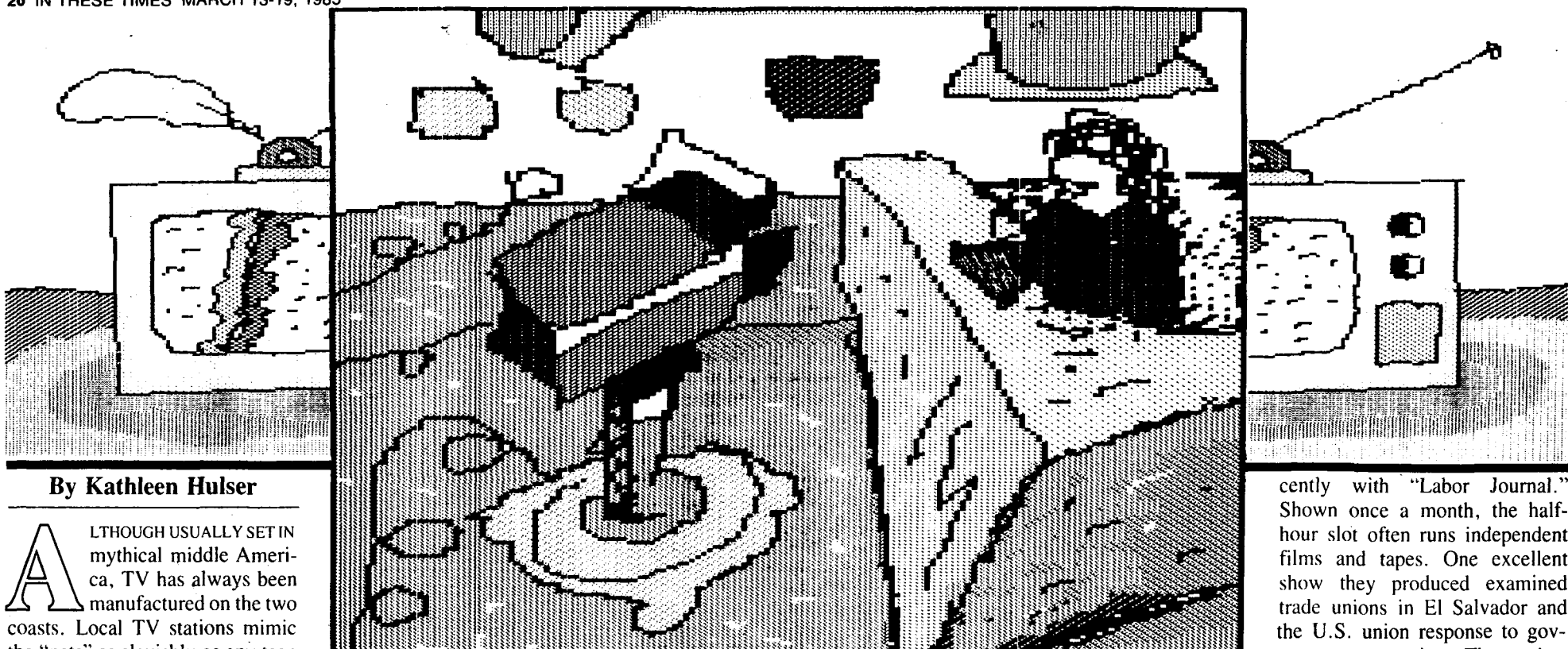
As for the black press, on Aug. 20, 1939, when the good fight was in high gear, the *Worker* printed a letter to me from sports editor Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the nation's largest black weekly, in which Smith congratulated the *Worker* for its current campaigning and its "past great efforts," and suggested more joint campaign projects.

We go into this, sorrowfully, only to illustrate how scholarship continues to suffer from primitive anti-Communism.

On the main task Rogosin undertook—searching out and resurrecting the story of the Negro Leagues—he does a splendid and historically important job. ■

Lester Rodney, former sports editor of the *Daily Worker*, is a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.





By Kathleen Hulser

**A**LTHOUGH USUALLY SET IN mythical middle America, TV has always been manufactured on the two coasts. Local TV stations mimic the "nets" as slavishly as any teen apes a rockstar's outfits. But in the last decade, local TV production has quietly sprung up in more than a thousand public access cable centers across the U.S., breaking new ground in home-made TV, and hinting at a decentralized base.

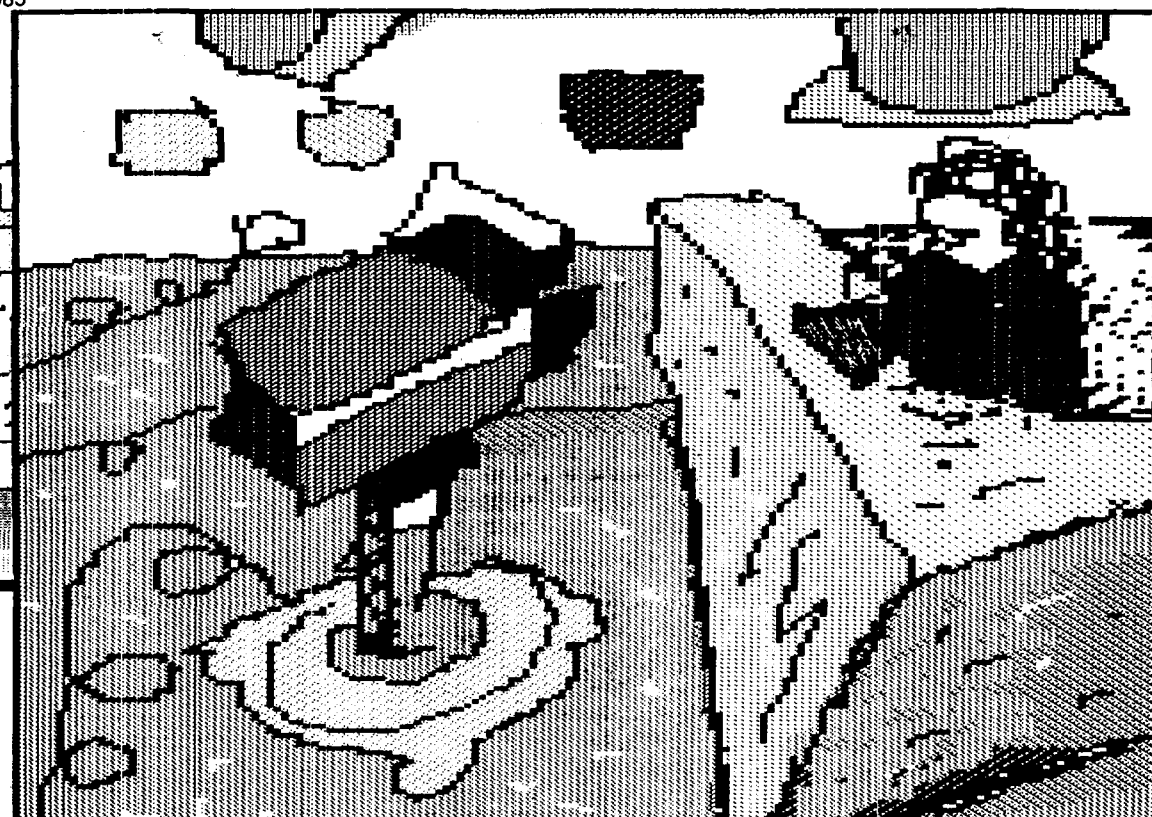
And unlike many laudable but unworkable efforts to get technology into the hands—and eyes—of people, access is reaching audiences, mostly because its appearance on cable systems guarantees it entree to the homes of the most dedicated couch-potatoes in America. Much of the work is spiced with regional accents and humor, and a concentration on local news, passionately argued single-issue shows, arts coverage and invention, gives the access channels a substantial media role belying the meager resources backing production.

For instance, last spring something called Southern Network covered the spring presidential primaries in the South. Steve Suitts of the Southern Regional Council, the Atlanta Media Project, Clark College and 40 Southern cable systems made it happen. The network assembled materials, grilled candidates on local concerns and edited the results into an overnight package, feeding a two-hour magazine format to the 1.25-million subscribers of the participating cable systems. This went on five days a week for nine weeks. Ambitious? In more than one way. Much of the studio work was shot by students. A mix of local origination cable staffers, independents, local print journalists and students blanketed the field. A team of editors working nights in Atlanta boiled down the footage which was then fed via a donated satellite transponder.

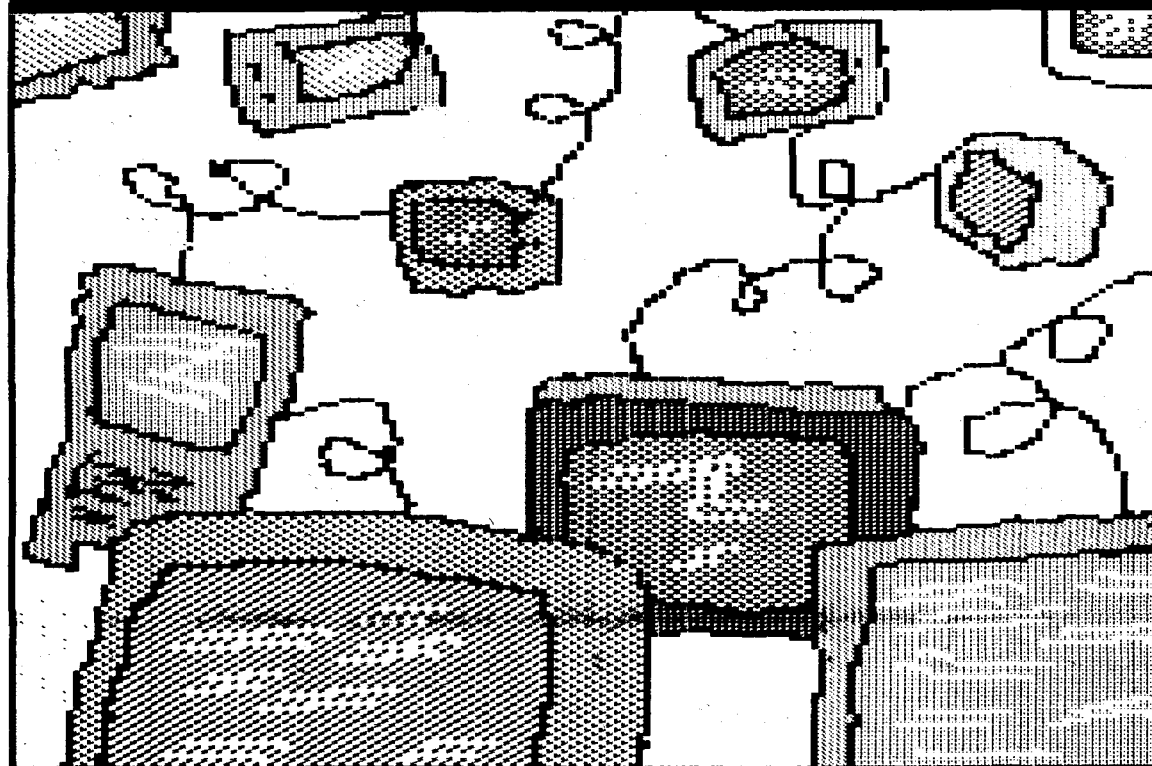
Local news, magazine formats and single-issue shows are public-access staples. In Decatur, Ga., for example, public access news provides the only local television coverage. In Palo Alto, Calif., an activist recorded a city council meeting where a nuclear freeze resolution was on the evening's agenda.

The debate, recorded in "World Peace Is a Local Issue," over whether the motion belonged in the city council's jurisdiction shows how public discussion changes elected officials' minds. Most council members initially opposed considering the matter, but after 40 citizens had testified, they were moved to pass the measure.

Media exposure prods local officials toward accountability, says



## CABLE TELEVISION



# Access TV addresses people, not Nielsens

George Stoney, who has championed access for more than a decade. He notes that even a minor feat such as making an official's face familiar leads to small shifts in public awareness, making officials more likely to be confronted by constituents on the street or in the supermarket. "World Peace" raises these topics, although the piece suffers from truly horrendous technical quality: the audio was so muddy that the tape required subtitles.

Some news programs have durability and dedicated audiences. "Alternative Views," an Austin, Texas, weekly program, has been running since 1978 with an annual budget of \$2,000 (in good years). Two leftist academics conduct interviews on subjects ranging from local ordinances to the CIA and Central America. The program is now "bicycled" to other public-access channels, and may soon be delivered by satellite.

In Los Angeles (only in L.A.!) there is a public access show called "Future News." Its all-female news team offers a potpourri of facts and speculation. One recent program featured the latest innovation in recycling: "reverse vending machines," that give change for empty cans.

As an unpaid sector, cable access is well populated by women, who want skills and airtime. Chapters of the National Organization for Women in Wisconsin exchange tapes with one another—one of the few examples of a functioning tape bicycle. In Pittsburgh, "Her-show" sprang from the concerns of media activists and women's groups. Now in its third year, the group has compiled shows on the history of the Pittsburgh women's movement, drawing largely on conference materials, and also offers a menu of international women's news, interviews with women artists and sports. A presentation aimed at educating children about sexual abuse used puppets. The producer of that show, Kathleen Kampfe, notes that with the pending sale of the deluxe Warner Amex system to Tele-Communications, Inc., access producing may soon suffer. The Pittsburgh city government seems inclined to relieve the new operator of the community service portions of the franchise.

### Working.

Labor issues are also a feature of cable access. No cable system in a place like Pittsburgh would be complete without the steelworkers' voice, and the "Mill Hunk

Herald" show fills the bill. Produced by some of the unionists who put out a feisty newspaper of the same name, the show isn't afraid to mix humor in with its more weighty commentaries. For example, last year it spotlighted the union fashion show: the latest in steel-toe boots and T-shirts.

More recently, shows have dealt with the unemployment ravaging the industrial city. Tony Buba, an independent who lives in neighboring Braddock (see *In These Times*, Feb. 6), has contributed some of his documentaries to the show and worked with the hunks.

Another voice of labor speaks up outside of Minneapolis. "Focus on Labor" emanates from members of United Auto Workers Local 683. According to Tim Lovaas, its prime mover, the material runs on several cable systems and is listed in some suburban newspapers.

His union has been "very supportive, and bought us a camera." The labor group has covered 31 events over the last four years and produced single-issue shows on the demise of PATCO, the fate of OSHA and union contract concessions.

The Labor Film Club in New York got into the access act re-

cently with "Labor Journal." Shown once a month, the half-hour slot often runs independent films and tapes. One excellent show they produced examined trade unions in El Salvador and the U.S. union response to government repression. The project coordinator, Carol Anshien, currently circulates that tape to other cable labor shows.

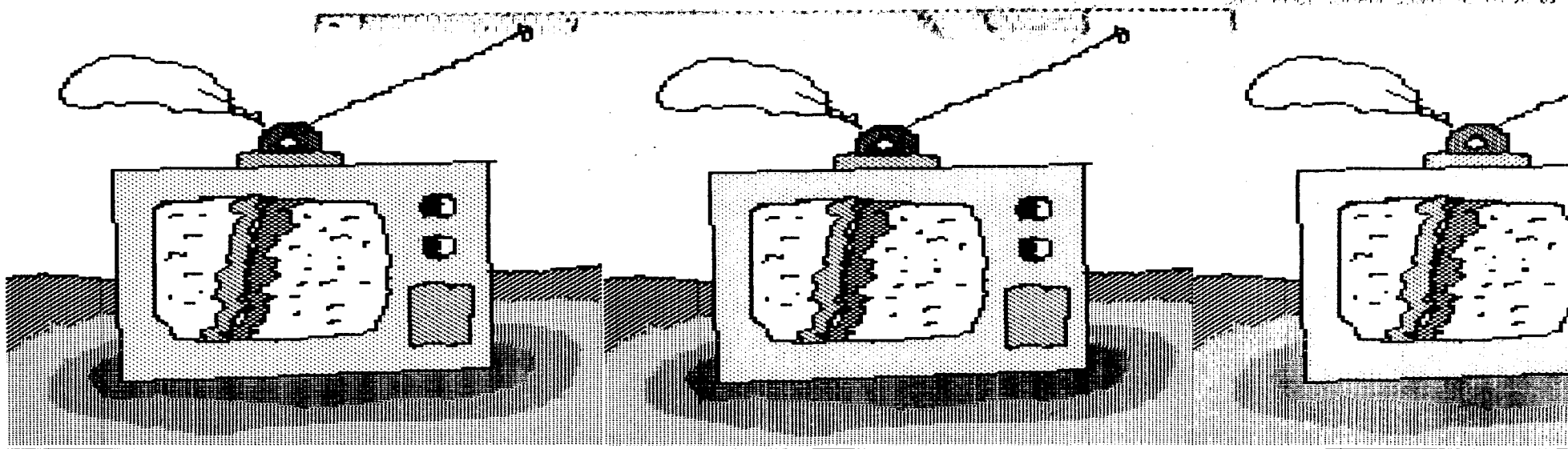
Most access advocates recoil from ads. But not all. Ads provide most of the revenues to keep BCTV in Brattleboro, Vt., rolling. This small town and its cable system don't have a lot of green to throw at democratic communications. That didn't discourage staffer Marshall Williams, who figured that the channel might profit from the absence of any local TV rivals. A year's run of an ad for \$500 attracted quite a few local merchants, allowing the channel to cover everything from town meeting spats over snow removal to poetry readings at nearby Marlboro College.

So far, access has depended primarily on cable operators, seeking a good public image and fulfilling franchise agreements. But a deregulating Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and hostile legislation makes the future hazy for operator-funded access. The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers argues that security is in a three-legged funding stool: cable operator money, a percentage of the franchise fee and yearly helpings from the budgets of organizations—such as the National Organization of Women, the SPCA, the Little League, etc.—that most directly use and benefit from access.

One route out of the funding dilemma is institutional alliances. Stoney cites access centers formed in schools. Board of education money, if it comes without strings, can provide funds, space, equipment and budding talent. At last year's NFLCP convention, where a Hometown Video Festival was held, a prize went to "Princeton Newsweek," a news format show produced by students living in a suburb of Cincinnati. Early on, the show attracted favorable attention, and the superintendent of schools pried money from the mayor's budget to build a studio. The operation went mobile when the school district donated a retired handicapped bus, which "Newsweek" faithfuls rapidly converted into a traveling TV unit. "When the football players return for training camp in August, so do we," says Stan Everett, project coordinator. "Our TV camp prepares the kids for a year of producing. They don't get credits or grades for this extracurricular activity, so only the most motivated come and stick with it."

Public access cable is often used to document the arts, often simply recording an event, work or artist





at work. When successful, this approach can be enticing. For example, in Alhambra, Calif., cable staffer Anne-Marie Piersimoni has pioneered a format that inserts the arts into regular cable fare. "Vertical Interval" consists of documentary segments on the arts, which run between programs anywhere on the cable dial. In one, Los Angeles artist Harry Gamboa confesses that he's not sure how his identity as a Chicano influences his work as a photographer and performance artist.

Another example of favorable localism in arts documentation is a half-hour work made in Newton, Mass., about pianist Andrew Wolf. Steering clear of the star-bio genre portraits of a classical musician, "Andrew Wolf Variations" sees the virtuoso as performer,

## So far, access has depended on cable operators fulfilling franchise agreements.

teacher, administrator of a music school, housewife and neurotic. The intimate tone of the documentary climaxes in a moment of self-parody when Wolf talks about vacuuming compulsively as a relief from the dreaded routine of practicing.

Atlanta producing team James Bond and Dick Richards shoot the weekly "American Music Show" in their apartment with their own 1/2-inch equipment. The funky, talky format is a kind of animated radio, occasionally lightened with such location pseudo-events as "the burning of Atlanta," a tale of demented terrorism and Southern nihilism strange to behold. In Dallas, John Leveranz and other producers of "ArtsEye" shot a low-tech show in 1/2 inch called "Trip to Paris." Highlights of the deadpan mini-epic included a survey

of the Paris, Texas, art community, visits to the fashion center of Main Street and stunning shots of the Mediterranean coast between Dallas and Paris.

"Trip to Paris" raises questions about style, content and the nature of access. Like the "American Music Show," humor makes this access accessible. While using documentary methods—the Paris crew didn't set up scenes, recruit actors, dig up costumes, etc.—the piece isn't a documentation of someone else's activity.

Documentation of the arts by no means exhausts the possibilities of access, and it's likely that invention and fantasy may be the access wave of the future. The experience of repeatedly handling equipment and making shows is sure to infest some access producers with the urge to make up their own material. Already, in New York City, several artist-made TV shows have run for years, from "Cast Iron TV" to "Paper Tiger TV," "Potato Wolf" to the "Live! Show."

The warmth of home-made TV rests on local reference points. These range from knowledge of place (the best buffalo wallow, the most hectic hour at Vinnie's bar and restaurant), regional accent and humor (people speak in their own rhythms, counteracting the speech standardization of national television), and local personality (talking history from the town's only resident who fought in the Spanish Civil War or the last chicken farmer left in the county).

This particularity makes access, with its "low production values," watchable and engaging. It gives access the character of a fiesta, not a spectacle (during the Hawaii Handicapped Marathon, a man tells how he turned home when he wheeled by his street during the race, compared to the abusively patriotic Olympic coverage).

By addressing people, not Nielsens, access has a fighting chance to become a home favorite. As access develops, we may see video-griots emerging in local productions where the style of presentation and regional content reinforce one another.

**Kathleen Hulser** is a New York cultural critic.

## ARTS «» ENTERTAINMENT



## An irreverent look at media

By Pat Aufderheide

**P**APER TIGER TV IS ONE OF the best-established anti-establishment shows on public access TV. A half-hour show in New York, and also available on home video, it regularly places this country's printed media under rigorous scrutiny. Critics, who may be professors, lawyers, journalists or video artists, attack one mass publication—say, the *Los Angeles Times* or the *National Enquirer*—per show.

The pieces can be insightful, and sometimes sobering. Professor Herb Schiller, for instance, dissects four pounds worth of the Sunday *New York Times* (it takes him six shows). He points out that the newspaper covers architecture as if it had nothing to do with real estate, that some articles are hard to distinguish from advertisements ("The Big Spill of Fall Furs"), and that it trivializes foreign news (ruby mining in Thailand, but no

mention of the U.S. role in that nation's economy). He argues, further, that the *Times* is not just a newspaper but an active defender of "the long-term interests, as it determines them, of this entire system."

When "Paper Tiger" opens up a magazine, it finds more than what's written there. Along with a look at the glossy insides of "Seventeen" magazine, you get a "Paper Tiger" profile of its publisher's family background. (Walter Annenberg's father, who controlled racing information, went to jail for tax evasion to the tune of \$8 million; Annenberg still owns *Daily Racing Form*.)

You get a perspective that raises as many questions about context as about content. Critic Ynestra King comments on the magazine that is read by half the teenage girls in the U.S., "Seventeen tells you what to do if you're in love with your girlfriend's boyfriend, but not what to do if you're brought up on a radioactive waste dump and whether you'll have de-

formed children."

And if this sounds like the kind of thing someone who didn't go to the prom might say, wait till you see ex-Fug Tuli Kupferberg talk about *Rolling Stone*. Drawing attention to liquor and diamond ads and to movie-star photos, he says, "All the failures of our generation, the counter-culture, are there, rendered in a neat, pseudo-hip format."

"Paper Tiger" is anything but pseudo-hip. In fact, it's authentically funky, as you might expect from a program pasted together on an hour's worth of public-access studio time and around \$200 a show. (Yes, \$200. Compare that with a quarter of a million dollars for your average network half-hour.) The quality, both of production and analysis, is predictably erratic, and the tone is as personal as the individual hosting the half-hour. Far away from Schiller's crisp analysis is Joan Braderman poring over the *National Enquirer*, a magazine she says her mother would be chagrined to see her reading. She thinks that the *Enquirer* appeals to our own irrationality. "I love it," she admits.

After three years of hectic production, spearheaded by indefatigable New York video producer Dee Dee Halleck, some 60 shows have been produced. Increasingly, other members of the eight-to-15-member collective are taking the lead in production, especially longtime members Diana Agosta and Martha Wallner. The budget hasn't gone up, and collective members still get together for a mad half-hour prep in a coffee shop before the show, but "Paper Tiger" video is getting bigger. It has won art world attention, with a gallery opening at Washington, D.C.'s WPA gallery last year, a Whitney Museum opening this January in New York and an upcoming opening in May at San Francisco Eye gallery. Now the shows themselves are branching out past close-up studies of one publication. A recent "Paper Tiger" produced by Kathleen Hulser (see accompanying article) analyzes subway advertising, especially the ads promising social mobility (If U Cn Rd Ths) to the riders racketing from one deadend job to another.

Sometimes "Paper Tiger's" hosts are more surprised than viewers may be at discovering that the media are large corporate interests. But the series is also full of a raucous humor that comes with an outsider's perspective, from people who have nothing to lose by mouthing off. Its daffy irreverence is set at the beginning of each program, when a message rolls out on the brown paper: "It's 8:30. Do you know where your brains are?"

For more information, contact **Paper Tiger TV**, 165 W. 91st St., NY, NY 10024, (212) 663-3887.

## CULTURE SHOCK

### The Cutting Edge, Non-Book Division

Punk has been brought in from the street; three publishing houses offer how-to books on haircuts of the kind that make your hair stand on end this spring.

### One for the Road

At some Boston theaters you can now rent a videocassette on your way out of the movie.

### I'll Take a Six-Pack

For VCR owners in a hurry, there are now drive-through video stores. One is called, appropriately, Movies to Go.

### Gallows Humor

After a condemned criminal ordered a pizza for his last meal, Pizza Hut yanked a commercial showing a death-row prisoner ordering a pizza. (In the commercial, however, the prisoner was pardoned.)



# Navy

Continued from page 10  
the Japanese contribution."

The new consensus is based on a warm political relationship between President Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone, known in Japan as the Ron-Yasu friendship. Both Reagan and Nakasone are viewed as aggressive nationalists, and at Nakasone's urging the Japanese have taken on two new tasks. The first is to extend the range of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, or navy, to patrol the SLOCs for a distance of up to 1,000 miles from Japan. The second is to help bottle up the Soviet navy in the Sea of Japan in the event of a major confrontation. With this latter task in mind, the Japanese participated in anti-submarine maneuvers with the U.S. Navy at the end of 1984 designed to test the U.S.-Japanese strategy of controlling the choke points between Japan and the Soviet Union.

Adm. MacKay was effusive in his descriptions of the close coordination that takes place between the U.S. and Japanese military establishments describing it as "a relationship that is unique in how close we work together." He used a special map that shows Japan as viewed from Soviet Asia to describe the strategic significance of Japan. From this perspective Japan looks like a long, narrow atoll hugging the Russian coastline. "It is obvious why the Russians are concerned," MacKay concluded. Nakasone views Japan in a similar way and has compared Japan to "a giant aircraft carrier" lying off the Soviet mainland.

These developments have touched off a heated debate about Pacific rearmament in both Japan and the U.S. In Japan, the peace movement—no longer the powerful force it was in the '60s—has nonetheless rallied large numbers of citizens to oppose the entrance into Japan of nuclear-armed Tomahawk missiles, which are being de-

ployed on U.S. battleships.

Japanese peace activists are particularly concerned about the steady growth of Japan's defense budget. It has been officially pegged at 1 percent of the gross national product for a number of years. Some estimates of its real level, however, range as high as 10 percent. With this steady growth in defense spending, there are renewed signs of a military-industrial complex linking a handful of giant corporations, such as Mitsubishi, to the Defense Agency.

In San Francisco the Board of Supervisors voted in January to oppose Mayor Dianne Feinstein's efforts to get the Navy to base refurbished battleship *USS Missouri* in the city. In the Pacific Northwest, the Navy decided last year to designate Everett, Wash., as the probable site of a new carrier battle group that is likely to be built around the *USS Nimitz*. There was significant opposition in Seattle to the deployment of the *Nimitz* in that city, which was undoubtedly a factor in the Navy's decision.

The Navy says it will decide this spring whether to base the *Missouri* in San Francisco or Pearl Harbor.

Using the promise of jobs and lucrative ship-repair contracts, the Navy has been pursuing its "strategic homeporting concept" around the nation. The Navy campaign has left conflict and controversy in its wake.

In 1983 the Navy decided to homeport the battleship *USS Iowa* in New York harbor after opposition developed in two other candidate cities, Boston and Providence. Last year the Navy attempted to get Everett and Seattle, Wash., to bid against each other for the *USS Nimitz*. The Navy wanted the cities to help defray part of the cost of homeporting. A report prepared by Seattle demonstrated that there would be very real economic benefits from homeporting—five times as many jobs and 10 times the payroll as the civilian alternative. But that still did not silence opponents of the deployment who preferred the development of civilian jobs on the Seattle waterfront.

San Francisco's Feinstein has mounted

the most elaborate effort of any city to attract the Navy back to a port where it was once the target of demonstrations to stop the deployment of U.S. aircraft carriers off the coast of Vietnam. As part of this campaign, Feinstein reinstituted Fleet Week in 1981.

## Jobs vs. weapons.

The debate in San Francisco has focused on the issue of jobs versus the deployment of nuclear weapons near a major urban center. The Navy talks about 500 permanent civilian jobs and a payroll of \$50-60 million, enticing figures in a city where the rate of unemployment among skilled shipyard workers is high.

Some critics have accused the mayor and the Navy of playing fast and loose with figures, and the city budget analyst has come up with some much less impressive calculations. According to his report, the city would receive benefits in the range of only \$287,000 to \$415,000 and would have to spend millions on dredging, streets, utilities and other capital improvements.

Peace activists see the Navy's homeporting strategy as part of a larger effort to build local support for the military by tying local economies to the defense build-up. Michael Klare of the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies told a reporter for the weekly *Bay Guardian*, "I believe it is a way of lining up domestic support for Navy programs. We can't prove it, but it's standard Pentagon behavior to spread contracts around to encourage congressional support."

In January the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted against bringing the *Missouri* to the city. Feinstein, however, vetoed the measure and says she will continue to press for the *Missouri*. The board lacks the votes to override her veto.

The Navy, meanwhile, has postponed its decision about the *Missouri* and is undoubtedly taking local peace sentiment into account. The *USS Missouri* may well end up in Pearl Harbor.

U.S. Naval operations in the North Paci-

fic are part of a new forward deployment strategy favored by Reagan and his Secretary of the Navy John Lehman. Lehman has stated that the Soviets will no longer have "a free ride," as they have in the past, in areas like the North Pacific. The Navy's emphasis, as demonstrated by the Fleet Ex operations, is now on being "more unpredictable" as well as more aggressive.

Several strategy commentators have noted that the North Pacific is the only common border shared by the U.S. and the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union is vulnerable in this area. Writing in *National Defense* magazine, military journalist William Kennedy described the North Pacific as "the only place on earth where geography would permit the U.S. to marshal superior forces at points crucial to Soviet interests and objectives while making it difficult or impossible for the Soviets to respond in kind." The Navy, it is clear, has also discovered this back door to the Kremlin.

The implications for the West Coast are profound. Not only have tensions grown in the Pacific Basin since the period of relative calm that followed U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and the establishment of relations with China, but now the economies of numerous Western cities from Hawaii to the Puget Sound and California are becoming increasingly tied to U.S. attempts to intimidate the Soviets in the Pacific Basin. At the same time, Japan is being urged to reassert itself as a military power, a development viewed with great trepidation by Australia and the nations of Southeast Asia.

There are few encouraging signs, at least until the end of the Reagan presidency, that the U.S. and Japan can find a way to deal with the Soviets as neighbors in the Pacific Basin. Instead, the shadow of military confrontation, for now an elaborate but dangerous game, looms over this region that holds so much promise for peaceful economic development.

Peter Wiley, a San Francisco-based journalist, reports regularly for *In These Times*.

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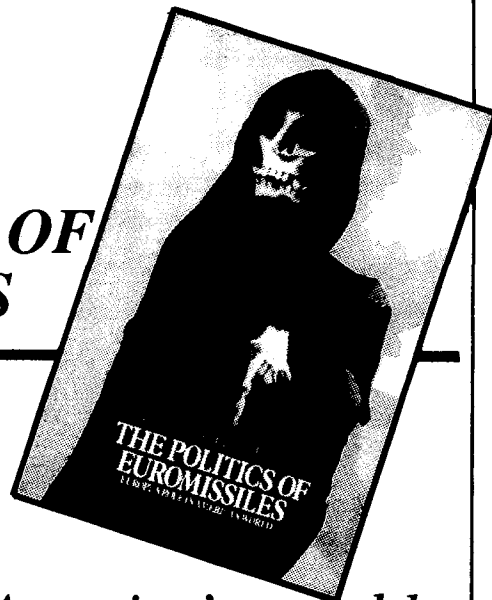
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# Malcolm

Continued from page 24

Black Power movement and the various submovements it provoked—the cultural nationalists, the Black Panther Party, the Student Organization of Black Unity, the black Islamic movement, and others.

Malcolm was assassinated, according to Mujahid Abdul Halim (a.k.a. Thomas Hayer, who admitted to plotting Malcolm's murder with other members of Newark Mosque No. 25), for defaming the name of Elijah Muhammad. Halim has testified that the other two accused assassins, Khalil Islam (Thomas Johnson) and Muhammad

Abdul Aziz (Norman Butler) had nothing to do with the plot.

Interestingly, all three are now members of the American Muslim Mission (AMM), which is headed by Imam Warith Deen (nee Wallace Delaney) Muhammad, who took over as head of the NOI after his father Elija died in 1975. Imam Muhammad has changed the name and theology of the NOI, bringing it in accord with the Islamic orthodoxy.

When Malcolm was suspended from Elijah's nation in 1963, the younger Muhammad (who was himself suspended at the time) became one of his closest confidants. In fact, it was Wallace who turned Malcolm toward the orthodox (sunni) Islam he professed after his official split with the NOI in March 1964. Wallace's ascension

to leadership in his father's organization was seen as a vindication of Malcolm. Mosque No. 7 in Harlem, which was burned down in the aftermath of Malcolm's assassination and later rebuilt, has been renamed by the AMM in Malcolm's honor.

At the same time, the rival NOI, now led by Louis Farrakhan (who was recruited into the group by Malcolm and who served as his assistant in the NOI's Boston mosque), is also attempting to implement some of Malcolm's ideas. Although he savagely criticized Malcolm after his break with Elijah, Farrakhan has lately been picking through his legacy along with everyone else. The group's celebrated entry into the political arena on behalf of the Reverend Jesse Jackson was an attempt at the black united front that Malcolm advocated

IN THESE TIMES, MARCH 10  
strongly during the last year of his.

During his last year, Malcolm also stressed the need to internationalize the struggle of black Americans. He addressed the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1965 and planned to speak against U.S. treatment of blacks before the United Nations.

At the NOI's recent "Savior's Day" convention, Libyan leader Col. Muammar Khadafy, speaking live via satellite, electrified the crowd of 15,000 and sparked ominous headlines by urging black members of the U.S. armed forces to desert, form a separate army with Libyan supplies and destroy American imperialism. Although Khadafy's message was rejected by just about everybody (even Farrakhan declined to endorse it), can there be any doubt that Malcolm would have loved it?

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Cynthia Diaz**.

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#### March 21-24

1985 Marxist Scholars Conference, Cobb Hall, University of Chicago. Sessions on political economy, scientific/technological revolution, culture; keynote by Michael Parenti, *News Media & Class Control: Technology or Ideology?* Program from Marxist Educational Press, c/o Anthro. Dept., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; (612) 922-7993. For Chicago info: (312) 475-7269.

#### March 24

"Harold Washington, Chicago and the Future"—Public forum on the future of the Harold Washington Administration and the possibilities for progressive political reform in Chicago. **Featured speakers:** Joseph Gardner, former director Political Education Project; Miguel DelValle, Chair, Latino Commission; Betty Willhoite, Board of Directors, Community Renewal Society. Discussion to follow. \$3.00, Second Unitarian Church, 656 W. Barry, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Democratic Socialists of America. (312) 871-1986.

#### March 25

Maggie Kuhn, national convenor of the Gray Panthers, internationally known spokesperson for the old and young, will speak on "Aging in the Urban Community." A panel discussion by UIC faculty will follow, including Dr. Linda Kaeser, Dr. Louis Rowitz, Dr.

Shirley Buttrick and Dr. George Hemmens. Sponsored by UIC School of Urban Planning and Policy and the Gerontology Center in cooperation with the Gray Panthers. UIC Behavioral Sciences Building, Room 250, Harrison and Morgan Streets, 7:30 p.m.

#### March 31

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#### March 22-23

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Ehrenreich, Stanback; music by Seeger. For information: RCDP, 490 Riverside Dr., NYC 10027; (212) 222-5900, x238.

#### March 30

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### WASHINGTON, DC

#### March 22

DSA DC/Md Friday Forum: Michael Harrington, national DSA co-chair, and Christopher Hitchens of *The Nation* debate "Religion: Opiate of the People or Force for Social Change?" Co-sponsored by *The Nation*. March 22 at 8:00 p.m. at Machinists Hall, 1300 Connecticut Ave., NW. \$4 donation, \$2 low-income. For more information, contact DSA DC/Md, (202) 296-7693.

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By Salim Muwakkil

**L**IKE MOST VISIONARIES MALCOLM X left tangled legacy. People of varying ideologies and beliefs have claimed it as their own, and they hallow his name.

Pan-Africanists insist that Malcolm's plan was to prepare black Americans for eventual immigration to Africa. Black nationalists claim a nation within a nation was his ultimate aim. Muslims tout him as a great propagator of Islam. Certain socialist groups contend that Malcolm had become a convert to their various doctrines in his last days.

Ideological scavengers have plucked at his legacy so assiduously that in 1985, 20 years after his assassination on Feb. 21, 1965, Malcolm X's once-crystalline image has become hopelessly blurred. His disparate acolytes are not solely responsible for this confused legacy, however. Malcolm himself was a bit confused during the latter stages of his life. But his belief system had been shunted from a black nationalist cult to international Islam and political radicalism, all in a little more than a year. A certain amount of confusion was to be expected.

Malcolm's powerful persona subsumed varying, even diverging, strains of the black liberation struggle. For example, the historical tensions embodied in the rivalry of Marcus Garvey (advocate of a mass-oriented, black nationalist capitalism) and W.E.B. DuBois (an advocate of cadre-oriented, internationalist and Pan-Africanist socialism), were effectively muted by Malcolm's skillful appeals to both trains of thought. He had an intuitive grasp of complex principles and, if required, could adroitly merge opposites.

Malcolm X (nee Malcolm Little, a.k.a. El Hajj Malik El Shabazz) was etched into the public consciousness by a 1959 CBS documentary entitled *The Hate That Hate Produced*. The program portrayed Malcolm as an angry, violence-prone believer in an exotic, black-supremacist religious cult.

He was a fearsome figure: a black convict who exemplified every negative stereotype about black Americans. But he was intelligent and disciplined, with an uncanny verbal ability to lay bare this country's hypocrisy. He was also extraordinarily charismatic. A *New York Times* reporter wrote, "Malcolm X had the physical bearing and the inner confidence of a born aristocrat."

Although it has become fashionable to portray the early Malcolm as a dupe of the Black Muslims, Malcolm's relationship with Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI) was symbiotic. For, while the NOI certainly gained adherents and exposure through his efforts, Malcolm's belief in Muhammad's message gave him the discipline and confidence he needed to refine his potential. He left the group when he could no longer gain sustenance from its narrow catechism. But it was the NOI's peculiar eschatology that initially framed Malcolm's devastating attacks on U.S. racism at home and abroad.

#### A tonic for young blacks.

Part of Malcolm's genius was his ability to sum up complex realities with a few words. When a reporter asked him why he didn't consider himself an American, Malcolm replied, "I'm not going to sit at your table and watch you eat, with nothing on my plate, and call myself a diner." Questioned about blacks' U.S. heritage, he said, "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock. It landed on us." And asked why blacks don't take the Americanizing route of other immigrant groups, Malcolm answered, "They don't have to pass civil rights legislation to make a Polack an American."

On the issue of nonviolence (an important issue at the time, because of the movement being led by the Rev. Martin Luther King), he said, "If they make the Klan non-violent, I'll be nonviolent.... How can you justify being nonviolent in Mississippi and Alabama, when your churches are being

bombed, and your little girls murdered, and at the same time you are going to get violent with Hitler, and Tojo, and somebody else you don't even know.... If it is wrong to be violent defending black women and black children and black babies and black men, then it is wrong for America to draft us and make us violent in defense of her.

"And if it's right for America to draft us, and teach us to be violent in defense of her, then it is right for you and me to do whatever is necessary to defend our own people right here in this country."

For young blacks, especially urban blacks in the North, Malcolm was a tonic. King's movement was regarded with derision and embarrassment by many Northern blacks. The image of blacks meekly accepting punishment at the hands of rabid rednecks did little to strengthen their spirits. Instead, it inflamed their anger and Malcolm articulated perfectly what many felt.

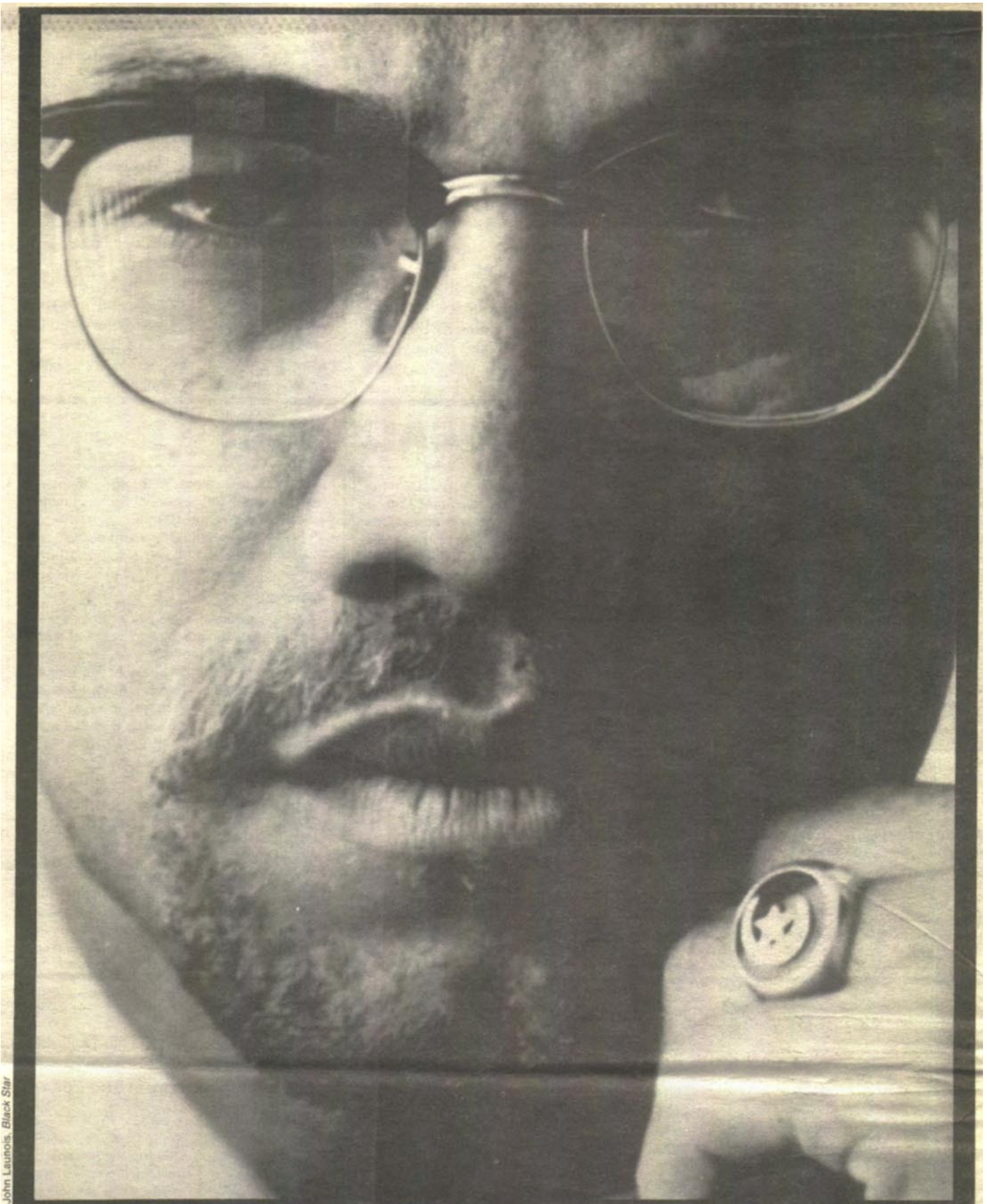
Here was a black man who was manifestly unafraid to challenge whites on any turf. Malcolm's intellect and wit proved an able match for even the most knowledge-

able adversary, yet he maintained his identification as a man of the masses.

Malcolm was well acquainted with the haunts of the underclass. He knew the criminal justice system, the welfare system, the ups and downs of the down and outs. But he transcended it all and by his example others gained confidence in their potential.

For many young blacks of the era, Malcolm singlehandedly removed the stigma of "corniness" from intellectual achievement. His style and sensibility gave birth to the

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John Launois, Black Star

**TWENTY YEARS  
WITHOUT  
MALCOLM  
X**